

NUMBER 7

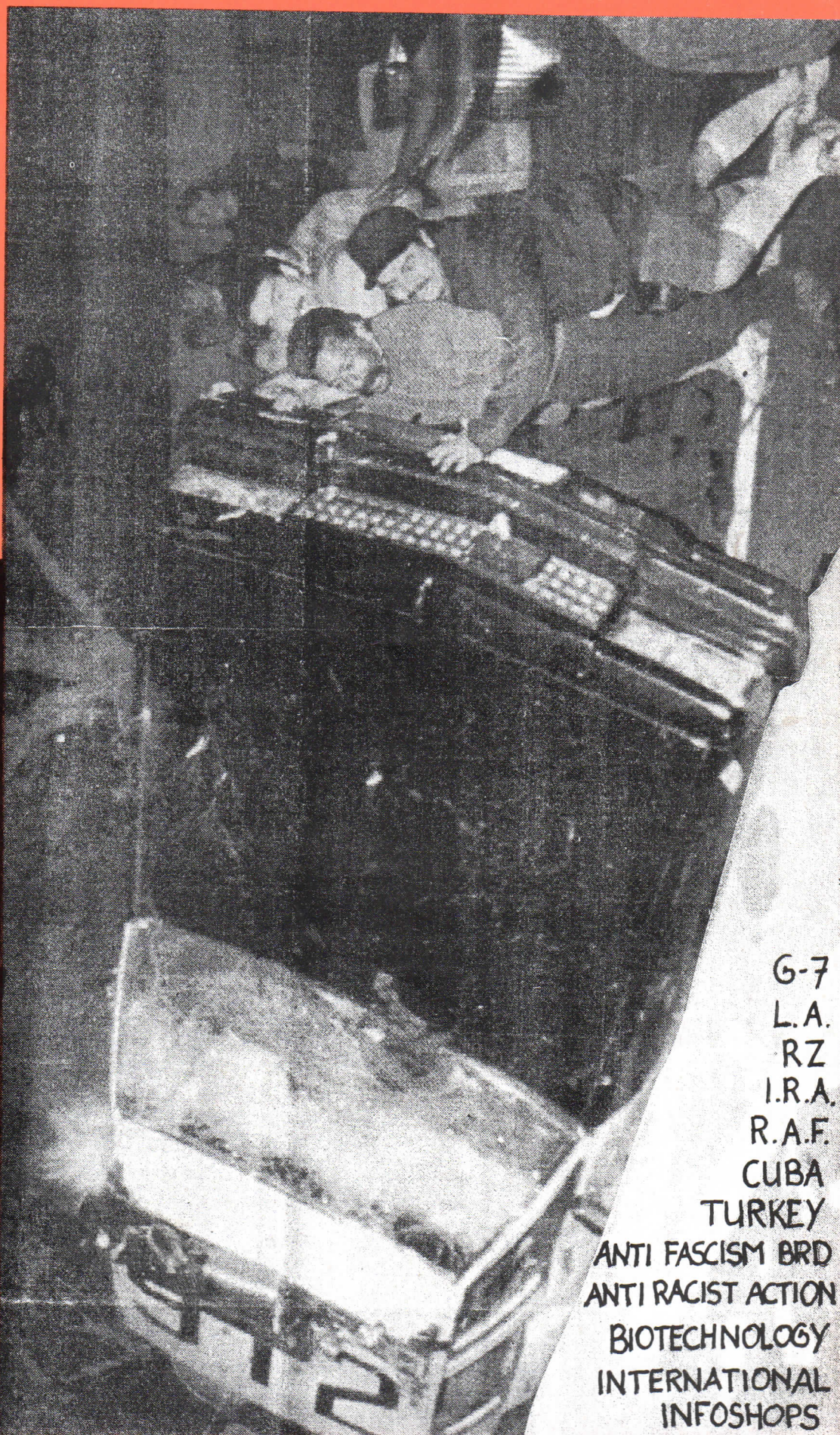
SEPTEMBER '92

150

NEWSPAPER FOR/FROM RESISTANCE IN EUROPE.

the choice of a
new generation

#1967



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INFOSHOP-LIST



SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR PRISONERS

We received many questions of people in prison who want to read the CLASH. Until now we could sent the papers. Soon our financial capacities will be exhausted. We are glad about every letter and question from prisoners and about new addresses and would like go on: but we just can't manage it anymore.

It would be possible to subsidize the prisoner's subscriptions by making the CLASH even more expensive. But who has enough money to afford the newspaper anymore. So shit, it doesn't work neither.

Therefore our appeal to you:

Enable the prisoner's participation at the political discussion!!!

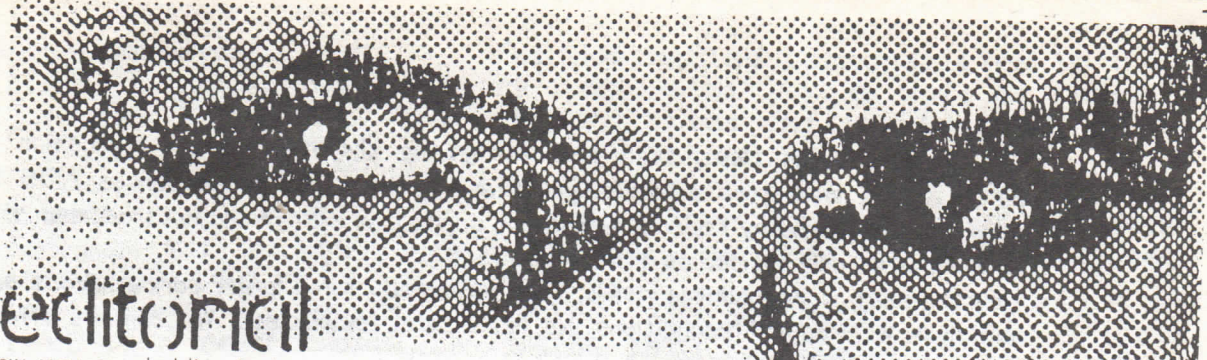
Take care to bring this newspaper into jail!!!

Overtake subscriptions for prisoners!:

Prisoner's subscription means: You send us 6 pounds/26 guilders/20 dollar and in return we send 4 editions to a prisoner, we pay the stamps. But without your support, we really don't know, how to continue.

PROTECTED PRIVATE PROPERTY !

This newspaper remains the property of the sender unless and/or until it has been personally and materially accepted by the prisoner to whom it is addressed. In the event that the prisoner is denied direct personal access to this newspaper, it must be returned to the sender with notice of the reason(s) for failing to deliver it to the addressee.



editorial

So, now you are holding it in your hands, the new issue. And, though it has been pretty difficult for us to publish this issue in time, we are very pleased that it is there. Like we have said before, we want to achieve a couple of things with this newspaper. In the last issue we have already explained, that right now we think one of the most important themes is to look more specific to what is necessary and good for the left wing radical powers, to become of societal meaning again, an attractive and imaginable alternatif to the present system. Connected to this it is important to talk honestly and open about what kinds of mistakes were made and still are being made, where good things have been developed which have to be remembered and where new strategies and perspectives are being or should be developed.

In this issue we have printed several articles, that discuss this theme. (In Germany this theme is named "Neubestimmung" which means a "new defining", although we think the expression "defining furtheron" is more exact. Much of the discussions aren't that new at all, but rather have not been noticed by us before...).

Firstly, there are the articles about/ from the RAF (Red Army Fraction), the RZ (Revolutionary Cells) and of Irish political prisoners. We had several good discussions about their statements, which we have tried to pass on in our preface to the articles. We think it is important to print our discussions next to the articles, cause we think that this can be a start to develop the discussion for everybody. Our discussions have not yet led to concrete "results", but then it is surely to soon for that now.

Another article on how people organise themselves, is the article on Anti Racist Action from Minneapolis, USA. We think it is really important for us in Europe, because of the enormous growth of openly expressed racism. They (ARA) organise themselves in sub-groups formed after the relations of oppression, but at the same time discuss together. It is also important for people in other countries, to find ways to fight racism concretely, without leaving the other relations of power out of sight.

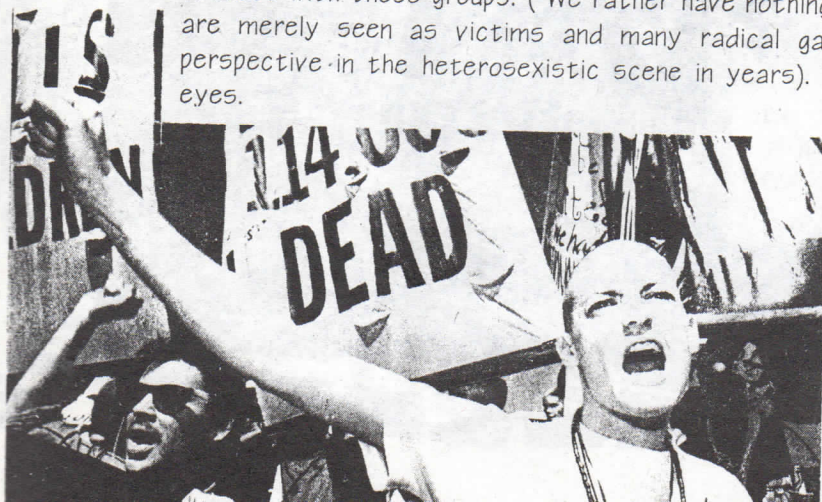
Another theme on which we now, like in the last issue, want to report is AIDS (HIV). Hereby though, we are immediately confronted with our own borders, which makes clear the difficulty as well as the necessity to look further than our own nose.

Firstly it is clear that we simply have to deal with it, because AIDS is a concrete reality for so many people. (To quote a puertorican comrade: "How can you talk about "the revolutionary subjects, when the people ment by that are dying like rats").

It is also clear, that AIDS is in fact no theme at all for a great part of the radical left scene.

A few reasons for that, in our opinion, are:

- In western Europe especially qeers, prostitutes and drugaddicts are hit hard by the disease until now, and they have partly organized against it. "We" rather have only little contact with these groups. (We rather have nothing to do with drugaddicts, prostitutes are merely seen as victims and many radical gays and lesbians have not seen any perspective in the heterosexistic scene in years). Thus, it is quite easy to close your eyes.



-It's also becoming clear, that just recognizing the relations of oppression is not automatically leading to acknowledgment and acting. The consequences AIDS has, is strongly determined by racism, imperialism, capitalism, sexism and heterosexism. But this is, when at all, only noticed as an abstract fact.

- Furthermore it is becoming visible, that we already for a longer period haven't occupied ourselves with basic-lifeconditions like healthcare, feeding etc. We can not afford this metropole-luxury (any longer).

- This means to us, that we want to deal with this in a conscious way. Also realizing our different experiences with AIDS, starting from the idea that some of us have to work real hard, conquering their until now not-relating and not-knowing.

- Furthermore it means, that some of what we have mentioned here as causes, are not only playing a part in the range of AIDS. Together with you, we will work furtheron, to get this theme into our hands to acknowlegde the different realities and acting upon it.

We also want to bring more of our discussions into the newspaper, F.ex. by writing in prefaces, why we print articles, what we find good and important in them, how we see the individual articles are connected to each other, how different experiences can inspire one another and how international consciousness can grow through this.

We have asked ourselves, why we didn't do this enough; do we find our own discussions too shallow, are we too cautious to write them down, and don't we trust ourselves to take position and expose ourselves to criticism. Our mutual experiences are important to us, to let us know that changes are possible (in our own group, as well as in yours), not to knock off, but to be encouraged and empowered, because we are not alone...

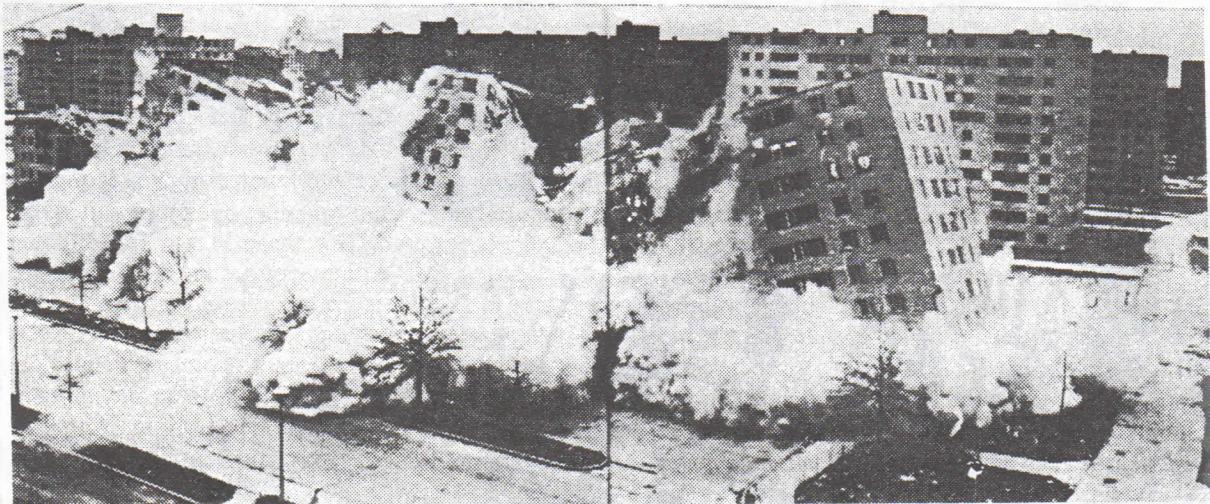
So do not leave us alone, your discussions and practice, we want to know them, also when they sometimes clash, , but also, when you had a good time. This project is a part of people who find it important to look furtheron to new horizons, to seek for new experiences, of people who are now isolated from each other, then, what could happen, when we all came together, and organize ourselves...

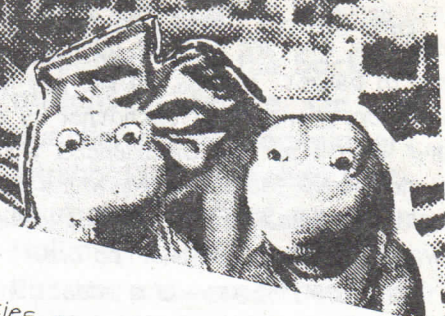
And why not? Do we not dare (anymore) to take position, to take a stand and defend it, to point out demands, to say what we want to say?

To expose ourselves to criticism, to open ourselves, to go out on the streets and expose ourselves to danger, to trust one another is difficult, frightening, but it is surely worth trying it, to gain what is withheld from us. To live and to express it like we want to. In our direct surroundings, by criticizing ourselves (and our newspapers!), to argue, to love and live together.

We do not aim ourselves towards all people, but to people and groups who want to engage themselves for a future without oppression of humanity and nature. This means roughly said, that the destroying- and oppressionstructure and its leading heads have to be blown away. Even more roughly said: we see an infostructure, which we want to build up, as a necessary infrastructure in this struggle.

And then, write us as quick as possible what you have found out together, how you can manage and do it...





All not so easy...
Like you can surely guess, we have run into some difficulties, some of which are specific to us, of others we think that many of them are noticed as well by those who, like us, are interested in the development of an international revolutionary movement.
One important thing to us is, that many people with different political and cultural experiences, ideas and positions can come together, like in our group, in which totally different political and cultural experiences, ideas and positions come together. You can surely imagine, that doing this brings out very many difficulties, and that's what we want to point out right now, so that some can maybe learn from our experiences, just like we want to learn from others who try to do things alike.

Way of acting.
We have noticed, that among us there are different ways of approaching this project (as well as other projects). Some of us regularly need the space to think about the project itself, about solutions, improvements and conceptions and to look upon the project from a self created distance. To others this approach is unfamiliar. To solve problems, improvements and finding a definition of how to develop the project furtheron is for them

taking place in a collective discussion and in working together in the redaction group. This difference is caused by the above mentioned "cultural AND political differences".
On the one hand these political differences become clear, because for some people their way of approach is a conscious political choice. On the other hand these political differences do often not become so clear, when there is talk about setting of aims, ideas and dreams, which go far beyond this project alone. Actually, we don't talk about this very often, (although we think that they have their influence in the discussions), and thereby it's also difficult not to end up in commonplaces and utopisms. Therefore we think it is important to find out the differences and similarities.

An example from reality.

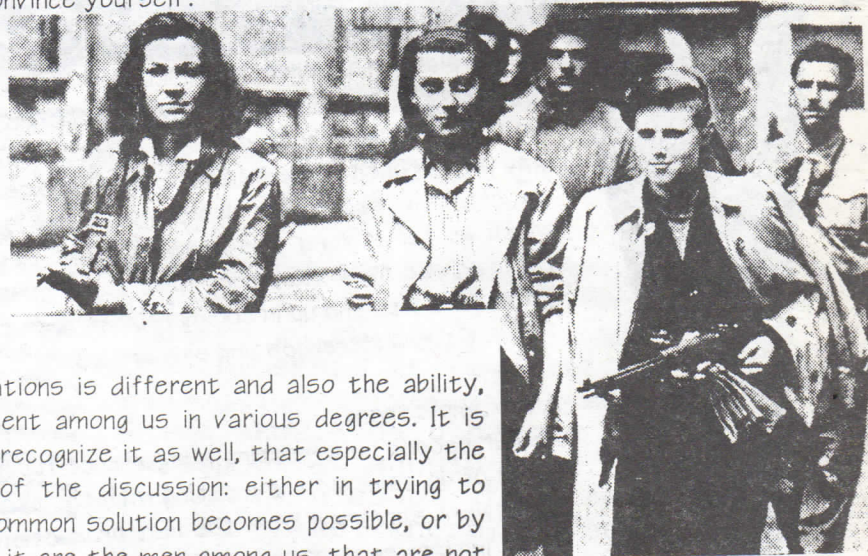
At our second last meeting a big silence replaced a part of the discussion for a long time. Some of us came to the meeting with the statement that they absolutely needed a break. They were stressed from the last productions; they also wanted to work continuously in other initiatives, which was hardly possible because of an overload of work, caused by our project. Next to this they were very unsatisfied by the project itself, about the practical difficulties and the incompleteness of the content. Out of the whole lot they took the consequence, that they really needed a break, as to become able to solve the problems and determine the projects' content, and to discuss our situation and the heap of questions concerning the present political situation...
Some others felt totally different. They wanted to bring out the next issue and were quite motivated to bring it out, which could then be used for discussions at home and elsewhere. They wanted the solution to practical problems and a more precise destination of the project in the course of the continuity of the newspaper. Right at the beginning of our second last meeting, they were confronted with a proposal for a pause which gave the idea as if a decision had already been made, without the possibility of change. They felt excluded and overruled by the decision-making. Both positions stood right against each other and an open discussion was hardly possible. Some mechanisms played their part, which we found out later, that occur much more often...

Mistrust

As a group of people of men and women from different countries, with different political histories, who are part of different political movements, we carry along with us a large heap of ballast as well. On the one hand there is superfluous knowledge of other political movements, images of each other by the history of the militant resistance. On the other hand we've all had experiences with discussions in which the object wasn't mutual developments. Discussions in which only the individual ideas mattered, without listening to what others had to say, without looking for other arguments and ways of seeing things in a way you did not see them before.

In our 2-year history as a redaction group, we've learned to know each other fairly well, learned from each other, developing trust among us. And we've learned to see our differences as positive and enriching and not as something dividing. The common development with each other and as a project is an important criterium to our work. (of course this doesn't mean that contradictions should be shoved under the carpet. It is often necessary to use a confrontation to make clear positions and to push through demands. This especially concerns patriarchal and hetero-dominated conflicts) But this isn't always very easy. When a few of us thought about making a pause at the beginning of the second last meeting, when it was already clear to them this was the way it would go, this meant to others that the mutual decision-making had been brought to question. The willingness to openly speak with each other, to look for mutual solutions, was questioned and there was fear to lose it. The whole heap of images of each other and mistrust came up, and the stirred up shit from the past led to a rigid defence of positions.

Afterwards we asked ourselves why this was happening and how our relationship to one another actually is. Are consequences, decisions and outcomes already fixed on forehand, or is there a possibility of decision-finding, - and is it at all desired? How are things going concerning our willingness 'to be convinced' and 'to convince yourself'.



Patriarchal ways of talking

How we deal with specifically these difficult situations is different and also the ability, after which we seek for common solutions, is present among us in various degrees. It is surely no coincidence among us, and you will surely recognize it as well, that especially the women among us intervene in difficult moments of the discussion: either in trying to mediate between the dug-in positions, so that a common solution becomes possible, or by not allowing a retreat into silency. Again and again it are the men among us, that are not capable of breaking down the walls to one another, but instead put the different positions against each other, that lose the openness. In this situation it were the men among us who were determining the atmosphere, and only the final criticism on the way of approach produced by us led to a different atmosphere, in which it became possible again to open up. The women draw their consequences out of this structure, and will refuse to take up this mediating role, and we acknowledged, that we all have to work actively on changing this way of talking with each other. Because the taking up of these mediating roles leads to it, that own positions are disappearing into the background, and excludes the possibility of finding common decisions in which all positions are taken into account.

One man, who had the same factual position within the conflict, noticed that he could not take up this mediating role. He did not have this "ability", which men should damn well learn, instead of putting themselves through with their blockheads at every possible and impossible situation and at every other occasion shutting up and letting the women seek for solutions to conflicts. What we did not really talk about until now is how these roles are influenced by the relations between men and between women, but do not wait for us to discuss about it...

What has been alright...

It was good for us, that we managed to fight our distrust and our (male dominated) structures of talking with each other at this same meeting, in favour of a search for how it can work out for all of us, how it is best for the project itself and for all of us.

For those, who wanted a break, it was possible to work on this issue together, although they have held themselves back from the actual process of production far more than with the last issues. That they, in the end, did more than they said they would do, they just "could not help"(quotation), and everybody thought it was great.

Those, who did not want the break, could agree on giving ourselves more time for bringing out the next issue (number 8), in order to solve the raised questions and problems. Or, where that is not possible, to at least develop starting-points.

THAT YOU THEN WILL GET THE NEXT ISSUE A LITTLE LATER IN YOUR MAILBOX OR INFOSHOP, YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO LIVE WITH THAT.

But do not be sad because of that, in the meantime there is enough to do!

Firstly politics can not be made on paper only, and for the practice you, like we when we are not sitting in here, are responsible...

And, in order to pass everything on responsibly afterwards, there still is the proposition to form local Clash-support groups. This proposal came from the last International Infoshop Meeting in Oslo, and we have already cheered this and written about this in the last issue (number 6), and we think that it is good, to concretely start doing it.

To give it an end...

we would like to make some remarks to things that really gave us courage:

We received mail out of the country-side, saying that people are taking care that the political prisoners in their region get the newspaper sent.

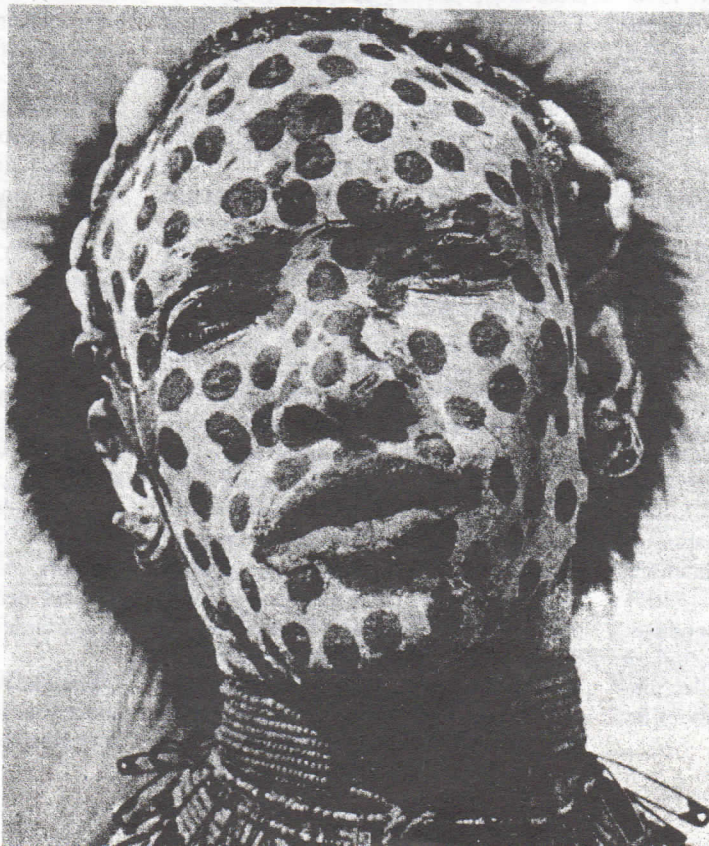
Furthermore we have heard that people in their city sell the newspaper by hand. This means going to Universities, concerts, meetings etc. with the newspaper and speaking to people about it, whether they know it already and if they would like to buy one (or many, and give it to all your friends...)

In the third place we have noticed, that more and more people are thinking about how to distribute this newspaper. As an international resp. european newspaper our distribution department still has a lot of white spots on the political map, that is hanging in their office, so that there still is a lot to do.

We thank all those, that have cooperated in any way on the newspaper and hope, that your example will inspire others.

When you have any questions, about how you should organise it, then simply write us .

We are looking forward for new mail...



The policy which is needed today has to win the people anew, has to organize them anew and has to develop a new perspective.

Interview with Nilüfer Altcan, ÖZGÜR DER

In August 1992 some internationalists had the opportunity to speak with Nilüfer Altcan (Human-Rights-Association ÖZGÜR DER, Istanbul) about the situation in her country, about democracy and human rights, about the revolutionary struggle, the tasks of the international solidarity. Nilüfer was invited to take part in Forum I of the International Congress against the Meeting of the G-7-States in Munich from 4th to 8th, July, 1992. Afterwards she travelled through various European countries, held meetings and discussed with many people. To start an international discussion is something which needs more attention, more concentration, more responsibility to be successful. It means to be open for the lives, for the problems, for the experiences of people from other countries as well as from our own countries. It means to be open not only to those, who are organized in revolutionary movements. And it means to be open to criticize, to ask, to talk about our own problems, experiences, questions in our struggle. To start international discussion means to start practice as well. Practise on many different levels.

(This interview was taken from a booklet "Our struggle grows with our cries for freedom!"

Ed. (and also address to order):

AK Internationalismus, Infoladen Bonn, Wolfstr. 10/Hinterhaus, 5300 Bonn 1.

Further articles in the booklet: Interview with Yasemin Gedik, former prisoner in the 129a-trial against the Workers' Party of Kurdistan, PKK, in the Federal Republic of Germany; interview with Esma Polat (beginning of 1991), member of Devrimci Sol., killed by police during a raid in Adana at the end of April 1992; institutionalization of the military coup and building up of a fictitious democracy in Turkey.

Price: DM 8,- (about)

Question: First of all we would like to ask you to introduce yourself. Please tell us, where you come from and what are the political spheres and functions you work in?

Nilüfer: I am president of the human rights-association ÖzgürDer (Association for Rights and Freedom) in Istanbul. ÖzgürDer followed as a human rights-association after TAYAD, Association of the Relatives of the Political Prisoners, was closed by police in 1990. ÖzgürDer struggles for the democratic rights of all humans in Turkey and Kurdistan. The Turkish government organizes all kinds of repression, torture and massacres against these demands. These repressions touch all sections of the population.

ÖzgürDer was founded in Istanbul in 1991 and closed by police the same year (14th of July). Then we founded a new association, Tüm ÖzgürDer (Association for Every Right and Freedom). But this was also closed by police in April 1992.

Question: As we have heard, ÖzgürDer is not only present in Istanbul ...?

Nilüfer: There are associations like ÖzgürDer in various towns in Turkey and Kurdistan today: in Kayseri, Malatya, Trabzon, Ankara, Izmir, Adana, Osmaniye.

Question: Are these separate associations or are they combined by the same program and rules?

Nilüfer: The associations are autonomous. We think this necessary because of the Turkish legislation. If there were the same rules, they could prohibit all of the associations by prohibiting one of them.

Question: What is the legal base, on which the banning is proclaimed for expl. now in Istanbul? And what are the consequences? Were activists arrested?

Nilüfer: After the massacre of the Turkish state against the Revolutionary Left on 12th of July in 1991, police raided the office of our association and we were arrested, nearly 60 people were in the office at that time. They accused us of offering resistance to the police. To close down the association they say things like this or they say, we offended the rules by our work. At that time we prepared the burial of those who were murdered on the 12th of July. Many of us could not take part in the burial because we were arrested.

The main reasons normally are that the members of ÖzgürDer offer resistance to the police. Esma Polat was murdered in Adana by police the end of April 1992. We also prepared her burial. At that time police raided ÖzgürDer and 14 people were arrested. The reason they gave was that they had found about 5000 carrier bags on which was written in Turkish and Kurdish: Long live the 1st of May! Also they accused us of hanging up pictures on the walls which were made at the burials of our friends and relatives. The police always claims ÖzgürDer would not work due to the rules of the association. We protest against these claims, but before this case comes to court, one or one year and a half passes by. During this time the association is kept close by police. With this law, with paragraph 38, they closed down many associations and organizations whose work and attitude do not fit into

their measures.

Question: Is this paragraph part of the "Anti-Terror-Law"?

Nilüfer: No, this is part of the common ruling jurisdiction.

Question: Except preparing the burials of your friends and relatives what else is ÖzgürDer doing? Can you give some more examples of your work?

Nilüfer: I would like to add something to the burial of Esma Polat. We also look after the families, mothers, fathers, sisters of the murdered friends. We care for the identification of the dead and also for matters of religious Ritus. For some of the families this is very important. For example the police told the father of Esma Polat that they would not allow him to come and take the dead body of his daughter.

Question: You also try to help the families, to strengthen them?

Nilüfer: Yes, we think this is very important. Also the families who are organized in ÖzgürDer try to take legal measures against the police. We organize actions of protest, write letters, talk with the responsible authorities and we also try to bring charges against the police. We did this after the massacre of 12th July in 1991. We also publish names of torturers, as far as we know them and we demand their sentence. And though we try and go these official paths, nothing happens.

Question: Now we would like to ask you about your journey to Germany. You have been here several weeks, made meetings of

various kinds, made interviews and you also took part in the International Congress against the meeting of the G-7-States in Munic. How did you define your tasks for this journey, which are the aims for your work in Turkey?

Nilüfer: Exploitation, repression is getting more and more in our country. I came to here because I want to tell about this. Solidarity in this country is very important for our work and our struggle. This is what I talked about with the people I met. At the International Congress against the Economic Worlds' Summit in Munic I talked about what the "new" World order means to our people. What the imperialists call "new" means that in Turkey there are no human rights at all. There are no rights for freedom, not even the right to live. People die because of terror. It is very clear for us, that the government in Turkey is being led by the imperialists and obeys to their orders. This government depends upon the imperialists in every political, economical respect. This means even more poverty, more exploitation for the people while the imperialists are getting richer and richer. In this situation it is very important to show solidarity with the revolutionary struggle, with the national liberation struggles, not only in Turkey and Kur-distan but also in all neo-colonised countries. We do not expect anything of this government. She knows no solutions at all for the problems of the people because she is governed by imperialism and oligarchy. An antifascist and antiimperialist struggle is being developed against this. And just now the solidarity of antifascist and antiimperialist groups in the imperialist countries and of organizations in the neo-colonial countries are of big importance to us. We need togetherness to fight against these powers. And this is why the meeting, the congress in Munic was important. We could talk to each other about what we could do together in the future, what

we could do together against the G-7, the seven richest states in the world. This was very important.

Question: You said to organize international solidarity, international discussion amongst antiimperialist and antifascist groups and organizations is very important just now. As you have met some of these groups and people

country. But the most important thing as far as I learned is, that there does not seem to be any hope and no development, no movement. Yes, people believe in their antifascist and antiimperialist struggle, they want to do something. But there is no hope in them that they could win. This paralyzes them. We think that this hopelessness might be overcome

by the revolutionary struggle in our countries, that hope will rise up again. In the imperialist countries they established a kind of domestic policy which isolated the left groups completely. this affects them even more as they are not united. They live at the very edge of society, they are marginalized. This is also a result of the used manipulation by the mass medias. The policy which is needed today has to win the people anew, people have to be organized and a new perspective has to be developed. Everything has to be done to make the ruling domestic policy ineffective. Everything has to be done, that people can get up and say full of confidence into their own strength: here we are! This is also our interest.

Question: You said you got the impression, that people and groups whom you met, were without hope. What do you mean? Do you mean they are missing a view of the future? What do you mean when you describe them as "hopeless"?

Nilüfer: I don't mean that they do not believe in socialism. No, people believe in socialism, they believe

in the struggle against imperialism. What I mean is, that the people in the imperialist countries have no hope they could move anything. That they don't know how they should struggle, with which methods. We will shake the world with our struggle in Turkey!

Question: We think that because we do not have the knowledge about our own history we do not know how to struggle. And many, who do not even know for what they could

you were able to get an impression of them. What do you think about their situation, their work? We ourselves realize there is a big weakness among the Left, among the antifascist and antiimperialist groups in the FRG. There is no unity. So maybe we and our work can not come up to your expectations, you might be disappointed?

Nilüfer: Yes, I met some groups and by talking to them I got the impression that there is no powerful and strong struggle in this



fight, are confused because values for which you fight in your country, values like "democracy and human rights" are completely determined by the ruling class. Permanently the governments talk about defending democracy and human rights. We forgot how to defend these fundamentally values with a revolutionary perspective. This is different in your country. Can you explain how the revolutionaries in Turkey defend these values?

Nilüfer: Also our government talks permanently about "democracy and human rights" They say that for the first time this does exist in our country. But they are playing a game. Speaking as revolutionaries we say that it is democracy if the people built it up, it is democracy if it is based on the demands and wishes of the people. Only a revolution can reach this democracy. It is the same with the human rights: they are the rights, the people demand, and also freedom. These have to be fulfilled by the government. In our country there are rights and democracy for very few people, who belong to the class which represses, exploits and uses terror - rights and democracy do not belong to the people.

We never wanted war, we did not chose it. Oligarchy chose it. But to reach peace for our country, a true peace and just, to reach this we have to fight today. Our demands are demands of human beings, of mankind. They are just and we will not be able to fulfill them unless we struggle for it.

Question: As long as the Sowjetunion and other existing socialist countries existed, there were two pole on the international level, specially concerning democracy and human rights. In the United Nations, in the Human Rights-Committee of the UN it was obvious that the socialist countries stressed another definition of human rights. There is nothing like this today, only the "new" world order of the imperialists. Does this affect your struggle, does it weaken you?

Nilüfer: Looking at the imperialist policy of democracy and human rights I realize their demagogy. As I tried to explain before human rights mean something completely different to us. They can not only be defined under a humanitarian aspect. They mean the demands of the people, of the oppressed people, they mean to realize these demands. The-

se are the human rights I am talking about. Maybe imperialism gained some strength, got more room, more air. But this is only temporary. Imperialism is kept alive artificially. It is because of the imperialist exploitation that there are struggles and fights in our countries. Now, in this situation, we have to believe in our own strength, and we may not loose the belief in mankind, in the revolutionary powers. Imperialism criticised human rights in the socialist countries always with an eye to its own interest, this was cold war. Always they produced counter-propaganda against countries like Cuba, like the Sowjetunion.

Question: We also asked, because there are many people, who lost their hopes since the fall of the socialist countries, since imperialism got stronger and stronger. They see no power against this, no power to stop this. They think, they are all alone and not enough to stop the military power which imperialism put forward.

Nilüfer: I only want to give a small example for how big the problems of the imperialist countries are indeed. it is a problem for them to stay in power. To discuss this situation was a central subject during their meeting in Munic. This is a sign of their crisis. I understand, what you say about the people in your country, about the reasons for their hopelessness. Many of them are afraid of the power of imperialism. But imperialism does not have confidence into itself. If it had, why should they attack Cuba? Cuba is a very small country, with only little economic strength. There is no need for imperialism to be afraid of Cuba. But it don't have confidence into

itself and this is why they are afraid of every small socialist movement. As soon as only a very small opposition arises, they use all their repression to crush it.

Question: Maybe you would like to say something special towards those who will read this interview, people who live in the european countries?

Nilüfer: We have a strong belief. We believe in socialism. We believe in the power of the oppressed people who struggle for their rights and their demands. Solidarity means to understand the demands of the oppressed people as ones own demands. The struggle in our countries will be a new hope for humanity and for the peoples in the world. We are aware of this responsibility. We fight for our human dignity, we fight for the self-determination of the peoples. We fight for a just life. Those in our countries, who determine their lives to fight and struggle for these demands, are often faced with arrest, torture, death. But to support these demands we are even ready to give our lives. This is our understanding of human dignity, of revolutionary identity. And we express our deepest solidarity with all people in struggle all over the world.

(August 1992)



About the crisis of the left there isn't much new to say, everybody knows it. But how to get ground under our feet again?

One requirement is the common reflection and discussion on the experiences of all movements and political lines. Who has tried what? What were the reasons, the thoughts, the ideas? What were the limits, objectively and subjectively? What mistakes have been made? Where weren't they discussed and tackled? This has to be an open, honest and self-confident debate, without glossing over or overdoing self flagellation, on the base that everyone takes seriously the attempts and ways of each other. Everyone is asked, armed and militant groups as well as the various movements, the resistance, the reformistic attempts. Important is, that everyone speaks on the base of it's own experiences and reality. And no one can know the result now.

[I really hope this translation isn't too "german"!]]

Following is the letter of the RAF to the Anti-WES-Mobilization in Munich, which makes some statements of the last declaration (see last issue) clearer, and articles of prisoners of IRA and the german resistance. They all discuss history and perspectives of liberation struggles.

The article of Alan Berkman, US-antiimperialistic ex-prisoner (he is free since 10.7.92, HELLO ALAN!!!!), we publish for two reasons. First it is a reaction on a statement of a Revolutionary Cell (RZ), GDR, titled "Gerd Albatrus is dead". That statement has been published in several german magazines and also in english by "Arm The Spirit". We don't want this paper to be un-contradicted, but even less we want to publish it. We find it shabby, in guarded words. Second we think Alan Bermans reaction is, even standing alone, a valuable and really internationalistic contribution.

We are hopefully looking forward to publish some articles of other RZs in our next issue.



We took the following article from the winter 1991 issue of the magazine "*The Captive Voice / An Glór Gafa*". It presents a part of a discussion within the Irish republican movement about the momentous situation and strategies for the future. Maitiú O Treasaigh's article refers to an article in the summer 1991 issue of *Captive Voice* with the headline "Ten Years On".

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The Captive Voice / An Glór Gafa is a quarterly magazine written in its entirety by Irish Republican POWs (Prisoner of War) currently being held in Ireland, England, Europe and the US. It is published by Sinn Féin's POW Department. Irish Republicans have always recognised that resistance to British misrule does not end upon their arrest. The battles to be fought and the tactics to be employed may change but the enemy remains the same. In the words of our comrade Bobby Sands:

"The jails are engineered to crush the political identity of the captured Republican prisoner, to crush his/her resistance and transform him/her into a systemised answering-machine with a large criminal tag stamped by oppression upon his/her back, to be duly released on to the street, politically cured - politically barren - and permanently broken in spirit."

The establishment of this jail journal is a tribute not only to our families, friends and comrades, whose strength and support have been inspirational to us all, but also is a clear recognition that we are what we are - political prisoners, unbroken in our deep-rooted desire for freedom.

The Captive Voice afford us a platform and an opportunity to present in print our views on those topics and issues which affect daily life both inside and outside the jails. The magazine contains political analyses of current national and international affairs, culture, short stories, poetry and the latest updates on prison-related campaigns and issues. Satire and humor can also be found within the special features, cartoons and artwork illustrations.

We have been pleased and greatly encouraged by the response to the magazine. It is hoped that the sharing of our feelings and experiences through the pages of **An Glór Gafa** will be both beneficial and enjoyable for all our readers. We are determined that our message and our **Captive Voice** shall be heard by many.

The Irish Republican Prisoners of War

Organise for changing times

A Reply to "Ten Years ON"

by Maitiú O Treasaigh (Portlaoise)

The authors of "Ten Years On", An Glór Gafa, Summer 1991, have given a sober but realistic appraisal of the position in which our movement finds itself a decade after the hunger strike. In the momentous events of that time, and the brief euphoria which surrounded our apparent progress in the three or four years following, there is much food for thought. Above all, there is no avoiding the glaring truth in the following statement contained in the article; "Our lack of effectiveness in the 26 Counties must be understood and overcome if our struggle is not to drift into crisis".

(Preface by Captive Voice)

Firstly, we must all recognise that we are not in a strong position at the present time. That said, the situation in the Six Counties remains volatile and, as the above article points out, the IRA continues to be the effective agenda setter; it is to the armed struggle that most of the British strategy is directed. That does not mean that we can never be defeated or that the British will inevitably throw in the towel but it does mean that no solution, good or bad, can be brought about without reference to the Republican Movement. To bring about the type of 'power-sharing' that was envisaged by the Brooke-talks (end of 1991, Brooke was British direct

ruler for the occupied North Ireland), or any other reform short of dismantling partition, means that the British must first take us out.

The reverse side of that coin is our own support base. It is a long time since it was pointed out that this struggle cannot be fought and won exclusively on the backs of the nationalist working class in the Six Counties (British occupied North of Ireland), but how far have we come in altering that situation? Our supporters have proven that they are resilient and courageous and that they are even prepared to give us the benefit of the doubt when things are going badly, but it

is not a bottomless well. We have managed, through a fairly grim period, to hold onto most of the support we had while Sinn Féin was seen as the dynamic factor in the political situation, but again there are unavoidable danger signs leading to potential isolation.

There is no getting away from the fact that it is the 26 Counties (Republic Ireland) that we must win the kind of support that can push this struggle to a successful conclusion. The potential exists but capturing it has proven so far to be beyond us. Perhaps we expect too much too soon, but unfortunately we have missed opportunities and wasted time that we

can ill afford. Nonetheless, the situation has improved somewhat since 1981 and in many areas we now have a presence, built up through hard work and commitment, which provides a firm base upon which to make further progress. In discussing our lack of support in the 26 Counties and the means whereby we can build an effective organisation and electoral base, it is essential to keep sight of two things; the overall political climate in which we have to work, and the type of politics we are engaged in.

In this country and world-wide there has been a major shift to the right over the past decade. The balance of power has tilted overwhelmingly in favour of imperialism. Mass unemployment and recession in the West has been matched by ever increasing misery and starvation in the undeveloped world. Such conditions lead not to revolution and a desire for change, but to apathy and despair. Only when people have hope, and the belief that things can change for the better, are they prepared to do something to bring it about. The collapse of the Soviet Union and its allies, and the apparent discrediting of socialism as an alternative to capitalism - the system responsible for most of the poverty and starvation in the world - means that most oppressed people at present do not see a viable alternative. That phenomenon has been reflected in this country, and it is in this environment that we as a revolutionary movement have had to operate over the past number of years. It is a tribute, therefore, both to the resilience of our activists and the tenacity of our supporters, that we continue to be the main thorn in the side of imperialism in this country while other national liberation movements, and indeed progressive regimes which came to power as the result of successful anti-colonial revolts, have gone to the wall. Likewise in Ireland much of the so-called 'left' has capitulated wholesale to the tide of reactionary right-wing ideas. We need only look at the Workers' Party for proof of that. However, survival is not enough in itself and we should be using this time to streamline our organisation and to examine closely the kind of politics we profess.

The current phase of right-wing ascendancy will pass. Capitalism is facing a huge crisis which will lead to political unrest. Take the example of the 26-County economy. For the past four years Fianna Fáil (governing party) has been hailing the great 'national recovery'. One may

think it is a strange recovery that boasted record levels of unemployment and emigration, and during which the government's own statisticians claimed that one third of the population were living in poverty. Now, they are admitting that there is a recession and that unemployment will rapidly pass 300,000. All of this will take place as the economy attempts to be-

come absorbed in a crisis-ridden single market. There cannot but be political instability.

People may not be inspired to revolt by grinding poverty and unemployment but such conditions can bring about a situation in which the ruling class finds it impossible to carry on in the usual manner. That leads to political crisis and a potential revolutionary situation. It is in such a scenario that large numbers of people begin to break from the old ways and to become actively involved in bringing about change. The early 1970s and perhaps the period of the hunger strikes were such times but we, the revolutionary movement who had spent decades engaging in revolutionary rhetoric against the partition states, were unable to take proper advantage of the fact that hundreds of thousands of people in all parts of Ireland were prepared to actively intervene in the political process for radical change. It may well be asked who could have predicted the closing down of the country after Bloody Sunday (January, 30th, 1972, the British army shot down 13 demonstrators), or the mass spontaneous sympathy strikes in 1981; and yet, what might have happened had we then had the political organisation capable of leading such a movement?

Things have, however, improved somewhat. Now we have a base in many working-



● The IRA continues to be an effective agenda setter

class areas of Dublin for example, a base which we have built up and held in unfavourable circumstances. Had such a base existed in 1981 then we might well have been able to harness better the feelings of anger and unrest which arose over the hunger strikes but which abated just as quickly once they were over. The question remains, therefore; how do we create the kind of party which can capture a conscious radical base and prepare for conditions more favourable for a revolutionary movement such as our own? We could of course trim our sails and adapt to the current climate but Irish history is sufficient full of erstwhile republican revolutionaries who have sold out.

I think that we have long ago realised that appeals to altruistic patriotism cut no ice in the 26 Counties, nor in the Six Counties for the matter. We have begun, instead, to pitch our politics to the concerns of ordinary people and Sinn Féin since the mid-'80s has striven to build a profile as an active supporter of the demands of people for better conditions.

There remains, however, a gap between our work as activists on the ground and the way in which people perceive our politics. To be quite blunt about it, very few people, even those who can relate to our work as community activists, see us as a political force; politics meaning how

the country is run, and how that affects people's lives in regard to jobs, wages, housing and so on. Some of that can be attributed to censorship and a concerted effort by our enemies to portray us as being beyond the pale. Much of it, however, is due to our own inadequacies, particularly in regard to our political programme.

While most Republicans are full of genuine concern for the unemployed and those otherwise disadvantaged, and are able to hold forth on the need for some ill-defined 'street politics', how many of us would be able to tell someone in Finglas or Mayfield or Southill how Sinn Féin would cope with unemployment - how we would run the country if the Brits were to pull out and we were eventually to find ourselves in power? That may appear to be bordering on the esoteric but that is the fundamental of politics; it is the reason why the Brits want to defeat us and the way in which most people think when they come to vote in elections. Clientelism of course plays a big part in 26-County politics, a factor we have attempted to combat, but politics still come down to major issues of running a state and in this game we are not seen as serious players.

We must have a fully worked-out and coherent programme based on how we could administer a 32-County Socialist Republic. Obviously in these times there will be comrades who will argue that we should shy away from socialism, and some have already said that it is a failed system that offers nothing to us. Let's be clear about that. The only failed system in this country is capitalism and if all we can offer to the majority of people is a change of flag then it's back to square one.

If our socialism is to be confined to vague generalisations and slogans then of course that will get us nowhere either. We must be able to say what we would do in order to break this country's dependence on multinational capital and how we would run an economy in the interests of Irish workers and small farmers. Sean Lynch's analysis of Irish agriculture in the last issue is a good example of what is needed, and there should be more emphasis placed

by the movement both in the prisons and outside on policy research.

There is of course another school of thought which believes that our approach in the 26 Counties should be as vague as possible and concentrate on broad national issues. To my mind that is a mistaken strategy. There is no ready-made constituency out there to be won over by appeals on the national question. There are large numbers of people who object to the British occupation but even few of those vote Sinn Féin. The victory of Fianna Fáil in the 1932 election is a classic example of how little idealistic patriotism means when the question of power is at stake. Both Fianna Fáil and the IRA at the time claimed to be totally opposed to partition and promised to revoke the Treaty. But Fianna Fáil were also, thanks to hard organisational work, present on the ground the length and breadth of the 26 Counties. They had a programme that pledged the party to clear the slums and end the payment of land annuities. Fianna Fáil won that election because of those policies, which appealed to the vast majority of Republicans made up of workers and small farmers. The IRA and Sinn Féin meanwhile became marginalised and easier to deal with later on. There is a major lesson there for Republicans in the present day.

The main lesson for ourselves now must be that unless we can combine a radical social and economic programme with the demand for national freedom we too, like the Republicans of the past, will be pushed aside. Organisationally that means placing our activities on the ground in

every city, town and village and working out a set of policies that can be regarded seriously as a better way to run the country. Only a disciplined and committed party can achieve that and its creation is an ever more urgent necessity.

Times are bad and we appear to be isolated and our enemies are sometimes brazen enough to write us off. Times change, however, and when they do we must be ready to reap the benefit. After all, in 1978 when two to three hundred people demonstrated at the GPO in support of the blanket men and Armagh women (Armagh = women prison), who would have predicted that three short years later tens of thousands would take to the streets and shake the 26-County establishment to its rotten core?

(After the political status of the prisoners was deprived by the British state and the building of the H-Blocks began the republican prisoners in Long Kesh started with a blanket and dirt strike at Sept. 14th, 1976. Little by little more and more prisoners joined the strike. Blanket and dirt strike meant not to wash and to wear no clothes (the prison clothes were refused) and to accept only a blanket for the night. In February 1980 the women in Armagh prison joined the strike. Since October, 10th. 1980 prisoners in Long Kesh and Armagh started with a hungerstrike in addition that lasted till December, 18th. 1980. Since the British state did not keep to his concessions, on March, 1st, 1981 the prisoners started again with a hungerstrike that lasted until the third of October, 1981. Ten men died during this hunger strike. Only a few partitive concessions could be won.)



● Who would have predicted in 1978 that three short years later that tens of thousands would take to the streets of the 26 Counties and shake the establishment to the core?

GREETINGS TO ALL THOSE TAKING PART IN THE DEMONSTRATIONS AND CONGRESSES AGAINST THE WORLD ECONOMIC SUMMIT IN MUNICH!

We are glad that you all have come to this demonstration and to this congress, despite the massive numbers of police troops and the media's smear-campaign, which both attempted to beat down and defeat your organizing efforts and preparations.

Despite the varying levels in the development of the struggle and differing conditions, there remains the need for a common search for urgent solutions for peoples' lives against the world-dominating policies of the G-7 states, whose capitalist power rules over people and destroys nature.

We think it's correct that you all have chosen to oppose the 500-year festival of imperialism with this demonstration, congress, and days of actions. You have showed that on our side - the side of the oppressed - history and the consciousness of struggle are alive. As long as this imperialist system, which values human lives and nature as mere tools of capitalism, exists, there will also exist a struggle for a society free from domination. The struggle for the liberation of spiritual worth will be carried out wherever racist and sexist structures of oppression exist which deny the worth of human beings.

With this congress, you have made it possible to exchange experiences with one another and to learn from each other, to come to common evaluations and to begin working on common strategies.

Given the contemporary situation, we think its extremely important, both here as well as internationally, to arrive at concrete common goals and demands. We need to come up with proposals as to what steps need to be taken against the ruling powers' grip over people and nature - whether in Munich, Rio, Los Angeles or Maputo, whether in Palestine or Kurdistan - and reverse the tide of global catastrophe.

A process of appropriation from below is created in concrete struggles and demands which confront the ruling powers' with the peoples' needs. For example, the struggle for living spaces, the struggle against destructive and pointless labour, the struggle against environmental destruction, the prison struggles, organizing help for refugees, anti-fascist mobilizations, and the demand for debt-cancellation and reparations from the imperialist states which have profited from colonizing peoples.

We in Germany bear a great deal of responsibility in this process, because we live under a state whose capacity for destruction is enormous. Domestically, the ruling powers have created a reactionary climate which has resulted in racist mobilizations and an almost daily war against refugees. The ruling powers need this reactionary climate to strengthen the German male-consciousness and as a safety-valve against the increasingly desperate liv-

ing conditions of millions of people here, because they want to be given a free-hand for their super-power politics: today, the German mark marches across Eastern Europe, tomorrow, German troops march across the globe. Next to Japan, Germany has the world's strongest economy. The might of German capital is unbroken.

With this statement from us, we'd like to make some points from our April communique (namely, our de-escalation) clear to the comrades from other countries who have travelled here for these protests.

This is part of our special steps within Germany. We don't question the legitimacy of armed liberation struggles in other countries; our deepest solidarity goes out to all those struggling for liberation throughout the world.

It is up for those involved in the struggle to decide, based upon their specific conditions, which means and forms of struggle should be employed at a given point in time.

For you all, we'd like to say something brief about our own history.

We, the RAF, came into existence in the early 70s out of the world-wide anti-Vietnam War movement. Our beginnings came during the 68-revolts, a time when many people became active; in this country, where, after Auschwitz, there was no broad social discussion of Germany's Nazi past and where ex-Nazis held posi-

tions of power in all the major government and financial institutions, communists and anti-fascists were spied on, and all those who sought to break with Germany's fascist past faced repression. Against this gloomy and suffocating imperialist reality in post-war Germany, an entire generation sought new emancipatory and anti-capitalist means of living. For example, base-democratic structures at schools and universities, living together in communes as opposed to nuclear families, organizing women against their traditional roles and against their oppression both within society and within the left.

During the Vietnam War, our country was the most important turntable for the US-genocide of the Vietnamese people. We linked ourselves to the world-wide resistance to US-imperialism.

At that time, the existence of the Soviet Union made it easier to secure ties to the national liberation movements of the South. Under those global circumstances, we made our radical struggle here part of the international anti-imperialist liberation front. That was our sworn perspective, to carry out simultaneous international struggle to achieve freedom.

Even when imperialism was able to halt the advance of the liberation struggles at the end of the 70s, our politics were still primarily orientated in this way and remained that way up to the mid-80s. We used our strength in the 80s to hinder the imperialist roll-back, in order to turn around the history since the October Revolution; we wanted to re-strengthen our side.

In the various phases of our 22-year history, we have intervened in our role as an urban guerrilla against imperialist world

politics, against US policies, against NATO, against the formation of a West European bloc, against the development of Great Germany as a world power, and against the "new world order".

By the end of '89, when the annexation of the former DDR by West German was a reality, an entire phase of history, one which had begun with the October Revolution, had come to an end. Nonetheless, we failed to initiate a discussion of this and of the history of our own struggle - of its strengths and weaknesses - and to come up with a new orientation.

With our actions, we sought begin to create a counter-power from below and to start a discussion and re-orientation around this situation, which had greatly increased the social contradictions and given rise to new struggles. Nonetheless, we could not break through the feeling of powerlessness and the resignation to the victory of capitalism which had gripped the very people we sought to stir into motion.

It was precisely our last action which made this most clear to us, the attack on Rohwedder. With this action, we intervened in an entirely new social situation, one which arose after the annexation of the DDR. Its goal was to hinder the march of capitalism into the former DDR and to allow us to create ties with the people in struggle there. Now we realize that to come to a common struggle from out of two different realities and sets of experience takes a great deal of discussion and understanding, learning from one another's different histories, and to then go forward together in making a counter-power.

Of course there were plenty

of people who supported our actions, but these actions hardly started any discussions or resulted in any organizational gains, nor did they push the ruling powers' into any corners.

Because of all this, we need this break to come up with a new departure point.

We need an open discussion about new foundations and orientations in order to come up with new thoughts and proposals

for developing a process of change. A break also means learning from our own history, so as not to repeat the same mistakes, but also to bring along all the positive experiences.

We know that there are comrades who find contradictions between our statement in April and the current situation, considering, for example, the escalating war against the Kurdish peoples, which the Turkish state is waging with German weapons and German money.

There is no question that resistance to the policies of Great Germany, both from within and without, is extremely necessary and that this can't simply be limited to a process of discussion. But we feel that armed actions won't advance this process at this time.

To come up with a new point of departure, we need a common, deep, foundation-laying discussion.

Since global changes have global ramifications, like the increasing number of people deemed not-needed by capital and who no longer have any means of existence and who cannot escape their oppressive life's reality, we need to build entirely new foundations for our process of change.

For us here, the main question is, how can we create a counter-power from below that

can draw in more people who are being forced to the fringes here in Great Germany, people who are seeking a new social reality with human criteria and who reject the values and ideology of capitalism.

The history of decades of social orientation towards capital has alienated people from their lives. From this, and from the failure to create any existing alternatives, we can see why racist and sexist violence has increased here; it's a way of dulling the brutality of day-to-day life. By not creating groups consisting of different kinds of people who can work together to solve the common problems facing them daily, taking these problems in hand and struggling against them, what we have seen happen in our society is the rise of destructive and self-destructive forces and increased fascist mobilizations.

It's up to everyone who does not want to be crushed by the power of money to develop new social struggles which come from the people themselves. In this, we see the possibility of creating a relevant social counter-power.

But the development of this is also a part of our responsibility to all those people around the world who are struggling for

change and to all oppressed peoples, because it's up to us here to see to it that Great Germany's world-politics don't go unchallenged at home, but rather that there is a social consciousness that expresses solidarity with other peoples and which resists the ruling powers. We have to start a new social movement in which people can find a genuine social perspective and see the worthlessness of the capitalist system and its treatment of human worth. A movement with new content and values, one which can make concrete changes - because these are not goals which can be put off until "after the revolution".

With our communique of 10.4, a very long phase of our history came to an end. This was our decision, because we want to see a process of reflection and re-orientation on our side - it had nothing to do with the state.

This state has sought to destroy the RAF and the prisoners from the RAF and the resistance for the last 22 years using all the means available to it. The state failed, and with this in mind, we entered this new phase. If the state chooses to disrupt this

new phase, then it will be up to everyone to decide how to react, and we won't take responsibility for the consequences.

We have stated that an important component of this new rebuilding process must be the struggle to free our imprisoned comrades.

When we state their freedom can be achieved through a political solution, this is the result of years of struggle. Freedom for all political prisoners within a foreseeable period of time can only be achieved through a process of struggle.

It should be everyone's task to seize the initiative and struggle to end the torture and win freedom for the prisoners.

We seek a realistic life-perspective for our imprisoned comrades and for the prisoners from all liberation movement; we want this for everyone and with everyone who wants to struggle for justice and a humane existence for all the oppressed peoples of the world.

29.6.92

Red Army Fraction



POLITICAL PRISONER ALAN BERKMAN IS FREE AT LAST!

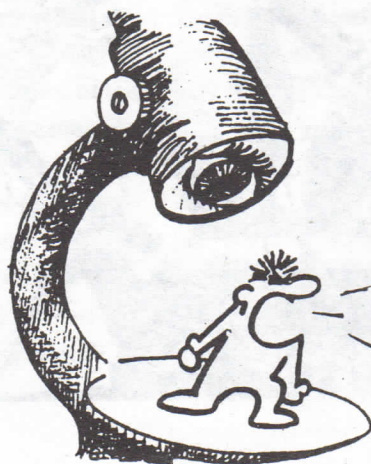
We are pleased to announce that on Friday July 10, political prisoner Alan Berkman was finally released from prison. Alan had been in jail since 1985, serving a prison term relating to a series of armed political actions against US military installations and corporations which support imperialist world policies. These actions were carried out in the early 80s and included actions by the Red Guerrilla Resistance and the 1983 bombing of the US Capitol building in protest of the US invasion of Grenada; this action was claimed by the Armed Resistance Unit.

While in prison, the US government opened another case against Alan and 6 other comrades (one of who was and still is underground). This case was known as the Resistance Conspiracy Case (RCC). During the RCC trial, Alan was seriously ill with Hodgkins Disease, a form of cancer. At the end of 1990, Alan nearly died from the adverse effects of chemotherapy. In response to this, Alan's comrades entered into a plea bargain under which Linda Evans, Laura Whitehorn, and Marilyn Buck pleaded guilty to charges related to the Capitol bombing, in return for which all conspiracy charges against Tim Blunk, Susan Rosenberg, and Alan Berkman were dropped. This was a very difficult decision for the RCC defendants to make, but because of this decision, Alan was able to be released in 1992 and is now alive and well. Otherwise, he would surely have died in prison from the ill effects of his cancer, coupled with the stress of the RCC trial which was the State was determined not to lose.

Alan Berkman was born in 1945 and has been active in the resistance movement both as an activist and as an accomplished physician. Alan helped treat wounded prisoners after the Attica Rebellion in 1971, and he served as part of the medical team that aided native Americans at Wounded Knee in 1973. He also helped treat and defend several Puerto Rican independistas and Black Liberation Army (BLA) militants. In 1982, he served 7 months in prison as a grand jury resister for refusing to talk with police about the treatment he gave to Solomon Brown, a BLA member. Alan was indicted for his medical treatment in a wide-ranging federal conspiracy case shortly after his release. Knowing he would never receive fair treatment at the hands of the State, Alan went underground until he was captured by the FBI in 1985 and charged with the possession of weapons and false ID and aiding and abetting known felons.

At a reception with friends and comrades on the weekend of his release, Alan looked fit and healthy and he reaffirmed his commitment to the struggle for freedom.

WE SEND OUR WARMEST GREETINGS TO ALAN BERKMAN!
FREE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS AND PRISONERS OF WAR!



notes on "Bad News"

(a reaktion on a discussionpaper of the Revolutionary Cells (Germaney))

By Alan Berkman

1. The paper provoked many thoughts and I apologize in advance for not taking adequate time to respond fully. I am using an english translation prepared by t.t. (? the typ.), and I have numbered the pages 1-14 for every reference.

2. The paper attempts to deal with many - too many - political points on varying levels of abstraction; the death of Gerd Albertus, - the self-criticism of Entebbe, the nature (ideological and strategic) - of international solidarity in the metropolises, the German Left's relationship to anti-semitism and to Israel. These literally life and death issues cannot be covered in this way. It's not only that so much is left unanswered: the technique of linking issues together borders, even though done unintentionally, on the unprincipled. To be specific : (p.i.) "Gerd Albertus is death". That stark sentence is obviously written to create a deep emotional reaction, a reaction that the reader (at least this reader) has to overcome in order to deal more objectively, and politically with much that follows. It's not fair.

3. I agree with the RZ that the current triumphalism of the capitalist countries is not an excuse to block criticism and self-criticism, it is more important that we strenghten ourselves in this period than worry that we will be weakened in the face of the opposition. I believe all movements, including the Palestinian movement, can and should be criticized in a constructive fashion if necessary. I personally published a letter in a U.S. Left journal criticizing those responsible for the Achille Lauro attack for anti-semitism in the killing of Klinghoffer and criticizing specific airline and airport attacks as terroristic in their disregard for civilian lives.

4. I am critical of the RZ for how they discuss the killing of Gerd Albertus. He sounds like a wonderful comrade, and I mourn his loss. But I still don't know who executed him. The RZ says, they cannot discuss concrete associations. I find this very problematic. Whose security are they

that there was an implication that Gerd was killed because he was gay. On page 11 at the bottom there is a nominal refusal to speculate on motives followed by speculations, there ideas and ways of behaviour which are not in accordance with the usual patterns are being met with mistrust and rejection "and that in such a world a gay identity per se is met with suspicion" If the RZ believes Gerd was killed because he was gay, they should state it and make it clear that they are not sure. If homophobia is that extreme in that group, we need to know it. Implications, though, lead to



protecting by refusing to simply specify the group in the absence of that one concrete (no other detailed information is necessary). I agree with the criticism that this emotionally charged public paper reflects badly on the entire Palestinian resistance. I disagreed with somewhat resented the RZ statement (p2) almost no one is able to see through the network of the Palestinian organizations and fractions... I also thought

suspicion, but give us no information or way to struggle. It's politically and personally debilitating.

5. I agree with the statements on p.11 & 12, that it would be superficial and short-sighted to excuse conscious decisions with the pressure of the situation in which they are taken. We need to understand those pressures in order to understand why a terrible wrong was committed,

but we'll never correct our errors if we only look at the conditions. I also agree that there are many organizations who have fought under brutal conditions and not succumbed to brutality. But I believe, the RZ makes the distinction between the two types of organization too rigid, whether lying the blame on male domination or the Leninist model. I believe, that organizations, like individuals, have the capacity to both commit great wrongs and to rectify them. To quote a great German thinker (Ghoete): "I have never heard of a crime which I could not imagine committing myself."

It serves the RZ's larger political argument to make rigid distinctions, but I am not sure it matches the lessons of recent history: the "Bad News" paper starts with a quote from Roque Dalton. I am sure it was not a coincidence that the RZ used a quote from a revolutionary poet killed by his own organization. Is the ERP doomed to speak the lan-



guage of the future dictators? Shouldn't we take note that Commandante Villalobos used the occasion of his first public address to the people of El Salvador to do an organizational self-criticism about the killing of Roque Dalton? INTERNAL killing certainly wrecked the FLP of El Salvador, yet they seem to have

been able to change and play a positive role in the struggle of the people. I can't foresee the future in El Salvador, but I am hopeful that the ERP and FLP will be neither perverters of the revolution nor romantic losers.

I guess my point is simplistic: organizations and movements are complex, and their actions and politics can change over time and as a result of political struggle both internally and with others. I get very little sense from the RZ of the nature of the inter-organizational struggle that went on.

6. I have had some experiences in building relationships between anti-imperialist groups and organizations from national liberation movements, although my experience is probably very limited compared to the comrades from the RZ. I found it important, politically and personally rewarding, sometimes frustrating and almost always difficult. As revolutionaries from

the metropolises, we neither represent much of a social movement nor have extensive experience in many levels of struggle. So, on both a strategic and tactical level, there is often a wide discrepancy between our organization and that of our national liberation comrades. We can easily feel we have little

to offer besides certain kinds of material aid. Aware of our own inexperience and perhaps of our own racism or national chauvinism, we tend to agree uncritically with proposals that are made. In my experience, there are at least two major errors in this kind of relationship. The first is that on a political level, we and comrades from national groups are all functioning as revolutionaries in our respective countries. That doesn't equalize our struggles, but it makes us comrades and creates a basis for principled relationships based on mutual respect and criticism/self-criticism. The second is that we are "uncritical"; rather, we reserve our criticisms and do not openly struggle them out with the other organization. Instead, resentment grows and comes out abruptly and exaggeratedly, often at a critical point. Rather than being uncritical, we were in fact being unprincipled by not struggling the issues out.

Organizations in the metropolises have to be responsible for our own politics and principles and for our own security. Differences may well arise in inter-organizational relationships, and they may or may not be capable of being resolved at a certain point in history. If necessary, relationships at an organizational level can be terminated, but I would not see that as an end of our anti-imperialist responsibilities nor incapable of change over time. Organizations, ours or theirs can change. In my own experience, I have seen groups self-criticize and change in practice deeply held positions and social issues such as women-liberation and gay rights.

Joint projects or putting cadre from one group directly under the leadership of another is often very difficult. Guidelines need to be hammered out in as much detail as possible. It's my

observation, though, that often the handful of cadre involved in such a venture could contribute qualitatively more to international solidarity by staying and working in the metropole. That may not be true for occasional individuals with special skills and those are the cases when clear agreements are needed.

7. I understand that some people question the fact around the Entebbe aktion as they are presented by the RZ. I don't know what to make of the self-criticism if the facts are wrong, so for my purposes, I will accept them as they are presented.

First, Entebbe.

If there was a "selection" of Jewish passengers, it was anti-semitic and needs to be rejected by principle people. But I'm uncomfortable with the RZ's self-criticism of anti-semitism. Somehow, the "specialness" of the German people's relationship to the Jews and to the holocaust becomes the moral basis for political support for the theocratic state of Israel. That "special relationship" has been used by the German state for its massive support for Israel; Now a revolutionary group uses the same reasoning to arrive at almost (not exactly) the same conclusion. That doesn't seem right. It seems to me that progressive political people of all nationalities need to reject anti-semitism because it's a philosophy and a practice that promotes hatred of a specific religious group based solely on religion, and to some extent, on genetics. We struggle for equality and an end to all forms of discrimination and oppression; we believe individuals should be judged on their actions, not their race, sex, religion, gender choice etc. So, if anti-semitism must be rejected by Germans, it must equally be



c'est la lutte finale,
groupons-nous et demain,
l'internationale
sera le genre humain.

rejected by Americans, by the Poles, by the Palestinians. It's because it's morally wrong and reprehensible, not because of the Holocaust. At the same time, I can understand that anti-semitism may be a more acute problem in Germany, while racism towards Black people may be a more acute problem in the U.S. Yet, certain political and cultural principles underlie both racism and anti-semitism, and it does not surprise me to see the growing racist violence in Europe nor the resurgence of anti-semitism in the U.S.

"Bad News" takes the premise one step further to justify political support for the currently constituted Israeli state. Again, I think the "specialness" is misleading. If it's right for there to be a theocratic Jewish state, then it's as right for me in the U.S. to support it as it is for the RZ in Germany.

For many years, it seemed to me that the Israeli actions as an aggressive and repressive state flowed from its nature as a settler colony. Therefore, the Palestinian demand for a secular, democratic state was clearly the correct and progressive solution to the problem. If it was correct for me though, I think it was also correct for the RZ. And when the PNC called for a two state solution, I would say it's correct for all of us to support that and

to recognize the reality that the Israeli state does physically exist and the Palestinian state does not. Unless the RZ wants to privilege the Israelis over the Palestinians, I think they need to recognize that the issue is still support for the Palestinians. Just as they can recognize that we on the Left should not worry too much about "delivering ammunition" to those who are not badly armored, so, too can they recognize that the Israelis are quite well armored these days, and really do not need the RZ's support.

I don't understand the RZ's reasoning: so long as Euro-Americans cannot eradicate anti-semitism, Israel as a theocratic state has the right to expel and repress Palestinians. I know that makes it all very simple, but it seems to me their underlying position. Even, if for a moment I accept their terms, is it true that Israel as a theocratic and expansionist state has secured the ability of Jews to survive? If Germany and the U.S. did not give massive military and economic aid to Israel, it would collapse in a relatively brief period.

Like the RZ, I have been staggered by the strenght of nationalism; events in Central and Eastern Europe have certainly been striking. Yet, under the guise of "realism" it seems to me that the RZ has fallen prey to pro-

found cynicism. While proclaiming that they are not generalizing their criticism to the entire Palestinian liberation struggle, they seem quite sure that the Palestinians would turn into "monsters" once massed together as a nation state (p.6). I assume then, that the RZ also cannot support the Republican struggle in the North of Ireland because victorious Republicans would only treat Loyalists in the same fashion that they have been treated. But is that true? Even in the conduct of the armed struggle, the Republicans are to keep their targets political and not sectarian. Mistakes have been made, but they are admitted and criticized. Is that what the British and the Loyalists do? Have the Africans in Zimbabwe, Angola or Mozambique treated the Europeans the way they were treated during the colonial period? I feel that the RZ and I have lived in somewhat different historical periods. I know that deep social problems continue to exist in recently liberated countries, but isn't it clear that they could be resolved while under foreign domination? The RZ is entitled to their own political life, no matter how insular and particular to the "specialness" of Germany, but it seems to me they verge on wholesale rejection of an entire historical reality.

One last word on the issue of anti-semitism: I am not at all sure the RZ yet gets it. On p.6, in trying to explain how their cadre could "select" Jewish passengers, they invoke "historical amnesia and moral disintegration". Maybe...but maybe the reason was anti-semitism, no matter how "anti-fascist" the comrades were. If you want to combat it, you need to recognize it and call it for what it is.

Second the kidnapping of Schleyer.

The RZ is critical of the hijacking of the Lufthansa plane. I agree with their criticism. As I mentioned earlier, I have publicly criticized similar actions before. Although the Left's ultimate motivations and goals are humanistic, I believe there is some truth to the observation that violence can dull sensibilities. Self-righteousness, a sense of terrible wrongs being inflicted by the imperialist system, and a deeply held conviction that we need to fight for the future can sometimes lead to the "end justifies the means" philosophy discussed by the RZ. I have come to believe that it is more likely that "the means will shape the end".

I would also point out, though, that several of the most important Palestinians organizations have also rejected hijacking as a tactic. I think it is important and principled to point that out. For

revolutionary morality is shared by most Palestinian groups.

8. I want to make just one more comment: on p.8, the RZ seems to say that the basis for their anti-imperialism was an understanding that national liberation and social liberation were one unitary process. Clearly, that has not always been true, although I find their statement that "the takeover of power rather destroyed than developed the social content of the revolution" in almost all cases is exaggerated and misleading. Did this observation come from discussions with the women of Nicaragua, Cuba or Vietnam? I disagree with the RZ's analysis of the basis of anti-imperialism. Self-determination is universally recognized as a human right and it should be supported on that basis alone. I also think that the achievement of self-determination by oppressed nations in the post-WW 2 period at least



a number of years, it has been the official policy of the Executive Committee of the PLO that extra-territorial actions against Israel not be carried by groups affiliated with the PLO. So, it seems that the RZ's sense of

temporarily weakened the U.S.-led imperialist coalition and the whole model of capitalist accumulation. There may or may not be a successful effort to reform that model by the bourgeoisies, but that's more our responsibility.



ity in the metropolises than a reflection on the recently liberated countries. Finally, unlike the RZ, I don't believe that national liberation "in almost all cases" has set back the process of social liberation.

The paper raises other issues, that deserve comment, and it could stimulate discussions about the complex issues unsolved in combining international solidarity with liberation politics in the metropolises. I have neither the energy or political clarity to delve into those topics, but I will say that I have been struck by the continuity of "self" determination that underlies so many social struggles in the metropolises and the "self-determination" of oppressed nations. What any of those struggles have to do with "revolution" is something we all need to figure out both in theory and



in practice. I am not sure we can arrive at an answer at this particular junction, and I do not think we should paralyze ourselves figuring out "revolutionary" strategies. Hopefully, our sense of right and wrong, justice and injustice is intact, and it can guide us in a murky period when old theory and strategies have proven seriously flawed.

Alan Berkman, white North American anti-imperialist political prisoner, April 1992.

A greeting message from Ali Jansen, Bernhard Rosenkötter and Michael Dietiker.

We want to send the International Congress against the World Economic Summit 1992 in Munich and you, the participants in the manifestation about the political prisoners, our solidary and fighting greetings from prison!

This manifestation is taking place as a part of the forum "500 years of colonialism and resistance - democracy and human rights in the New World Order". That leftist and revolutionary criticism on the ruling powers is thus connected with the terms "democracy and human rights" is new and uncommon - at least here in the FRG. Of course human rights demands connected with political prisoners, with prison and repression, within the solidarity with the struggle of the liberation movements have always played a part. But especially the tying together of "democracy and human rights" has for over 40 years served as an anticommunist war term in the Cold War. Along with the breaking down of the real-existing socialist states the propagandistic load of these terms has been removed. Because there, where the ruling powers lack their old enemy-images, it becomes possible to reposess the real contents of the idea of democracy and human rights, and to turn them against the destroying circumstances, against the despoliation of humanity and the destruction of the real-existing capitalism.

But, on top of this new possibility there are other, necessary reasons, why the question of democracy and human rights needs to be a theme in left and revolutionary politics.

One of these reasons is the fact, that the collapse of the real-existing socialist states had to do, amongst other things, with the existence of repressive and totalitarian ruling structures, whose extent we out of our - fundamentally as right now as then - resistance against the imperialist Cold War often did not notice at all.

Another reason is the fact, that national liberation movements find themselves in a situation where, because of the changed worldwide balance of power, revolutionary victories like Nicaragua in 1979 can now not be carried through against the imperialist military power. That is why many liberation movements are fighting to in the first place end the bloody state of war, and to force through basic democratic structures.

Another reason for us to change our attitude to the question of democracy and human rights, is our own politics, their development during the last 20 years and the limits that we've reached. With the current new-defining of revolutionary politics here, with the questions about the social contradictions and struggles in the metropolises, however, we see the tendency that more and more often there is talk about "the people" and "the interests of all people", as counterposed to the destructive politics of the ruling powers. This we think is wrong and dangerous and therefore we want to bring some thoughts on these questions in the discussion.

"Either human or pig
either survival at any price or
fighting 'till death
either problem or solution
between that, there's nothing"

This was what Holger Meins, prisoner out of the RAF wrote in 1974, a few days before he was killed by forced nutrition in a collective hungerstrike against isolation and solitary confinement.

It is this implacability, this lack of compromise and consequent militant attitude, that has effected the emanation of the fight of

the RAF and the importance of the fight of the prisoners. Notwithstanding political contradictions, this consequence, to not only name that which is acknowledged as right and necessary, but also to translate it into practice and then to take up the unavoidable confrontation and carrying through without compromise, still has a rousing and mobilising influence on many people.

It was the aim of the 'Kinkel-initiative', launched early this year, to break this emanation. It is their goal to dissolve the political meaning of the fight of the prisoners. Against this, the real release of the political prisoners can, now as before, only be struggled out by a strong movement. The first question thus is what the reasons are for our momentary weakness and how do we overcome them.

The attitude expressed in the quotation by Holger has undergone a shift of meaning in later years, before the background of the growing repression and the, until the start of the 80's, growing isolation of the revolutionary left. In another passage of the same letter Holger says: "fighting against the pigs, as a person for the liberation of people: revolutionary, in the struggle - with all the love for live, despising death, this means to me: to serve the people - RAF".

To many people these words, written more than 15 years ago may sound anachronistic, like from another planet. And this is just the very reason why we refer to it, because in this contrast a development is perceptible which we have to discuss self-critically these days.

From the revolutionary attitude, namely to carry on without compromise and to be consequent in the struggle without restrictions as a demand to oneself, the words "human or pig" - turned into a slogan - became more and more a criterion, whereby we measured other people, and became the way in which we saw society.

The appeal on one's own revolutionary consequence turned into the "everyone has to decide". And the political practice determined from this basis led to an increasing escalation in the struggle. In a directly revolutionary situation it can be right to determine the armed struggle in such a way, as to push forward the polarisation as far as possible. But while the revolutionary forces are in such a minority position as we held during the last 10 years, armed actions have a different function.

The result was that the polarisation couldn't be carried by the left here and finally the escalation had to be taken back.

The question of new starting points for revolutionary politics does not just arise out of the necessity of overcoming the thus originated isolation of radical left politics in social conflicts. Because not only have we not picked up the manifold social contradictions in the metropolises, but also we partly ignored them by seeing the population here in the first place as profiteers of the imperialist exploitation, and by determining the political practice tendentially out of the contradiction with this seemingly social unity.

Nowadays, on the other hand, there is the tendency to fall into the other extreme. All of a sudden there is talk about "what we want with the people and for our country", that against the destructive politics of the ones in power "interests of all people" should be carried through, just to quote a few examples of the last months.

But just as little as there is a uniform "metropole-zombie-society" - that can only be conquered from the outside - , there are no uniform "common interests of all people", that would stand opposite to human-hostile politics. The interests of people are influenced by their respective position in social reproduction-relations and by their consciousness about it. Therefore by no means all are interested in ending inhumane conditions. In connection with capitalist production, Marx de-

scribed this already 150 years ago in the word: "character-mask". How much clearer it shows itself in our confrontation with racist and sexist violence!

Patriarchy, a central structure of inhuman conditions, is surely not contradictory to the "interests of all people": the majority of men look upon the anti-patriarchal struggle as a struggle against their interests! And even if we would be able to convince the growing number of racists in this country, that their racism is directed against their "real", their "objective" interests, it wouldn't change the fact that the extravagant standard of living in the metropolises - the loss of which the racists are so scared about - can't be held upright!

Just like for us men in connection with the power that every man shares inevitably through the existence of patriarchal structures, also in connection with the destructive standard of living in the metropolises the key issue is refusal, the development of other needs, the achievement of new values.

The fact, that also in the metropolises more and more people are excluded from sharing in the standard of living, shouldn't make us believe that we can easily embrace "the interests of all people".

The rise in racist and sexist violence makes this very clear.

There are clear criteria for humanity and inhumanity; for politics hostile to humans, and for what could be human conditions. However, the strength of the capitalist system is based on the fact that, to a very high extend, keep the interests of the people bound to it: through the individual hope for well-being, wealth, power.

We have to learn to crush this system and at the same time, in the struggle, connect the interests of more and more people to this struggle, to the achievement of other needs and the creation of human living-conditions. That means that we should overcome the mistakes of the real-existing socialism - the attempt to determine the "objective interests" totalitarian- just

as we should overcome the short-sighted and fake-radical view expressed in the slogan "those not supporting us, are opposed to us without falling into the illusion of unified "interests of people".

We have to learn, how to act within the contradictions of our circumstances and in order to do that, we have to learn in the first place to live with contradictions! Because exactly in this ability, to live with and endure contradictions, lies the attractiveness of a revolutionary attitude: the strength, coming from the suffering of the circumstances and from the passion for a better life, to take the right and necessary steps unperturbed and consequent.

Instead of, out of the experience of meeting limits, falling into the other extreme, what has to be done is to learn critically and precisely from the mistake of the past and to develop further that what's right.

Seen in this way, we can create an understanding of democracy and human rights, which could become an important weapon in future confrontations. In that way we can oppose the so-called Kinkel-proposal and all illusions of "solution" and "pacification", as well as the myth of superiority or even world-wide victory of capitalism.

At this moment, that means we need to succeed in getting Bernd Rössner free, in the long run we need to build a strong revolutionary movement, for which the release of all political prisoners is but a step on the road to freedom.

International solidarity!

Michi Dietiker, Ali Jansen, Bernhard Rosenkötter

Prisoners out of the anti-imperialist resistance

Butzbach/Schwalmstadt, June 1992



Anti-Racist Action

ARA is one of the most active, organized, and inspiring groups in the Twin Cities, and in the U.S. for that matter. It concentrates on local concerns while always maintaining an international, radical perspective. The anarchistic, nonhierarchical way in which they operate can teach much to other groups. We thought we'd take a look at ARA and what it does and how it operates in this issue.

U of M Students say No! to the "White Student Union"!

by Chris Crisis.

Late in September racist Tom David attempted to organize a racist "White Student Union" on the University of Minnesota campus. He is known to have connections to the Ku Klux Klan and neo-nazis in East St. Paul, making him a threat not to be ignored. David placed personal ads in the Minnesota Daily, trying to recruit students into his Neo-Nazi union while trying to initially disclaim his racist, nationalist, sexist and homophobic agenda. Anti-Racist Action responded by initiating an Anti-Racist coalition on campus to oppose David's efforts to organize on the U of M campus. The following is an overview of Anti-Racist activities this past fall.

Tom David showed us his true colors on September 25th when his overtly racist, sexist, and anti-immigrant opinions piece appeared in the Minnesota Daily, espousing his empty white supremacist/separatist rhetoric, attempting to justify his ignorance using immigrants and "minorities" as a scapegoat for various social economic problems i.e. high taxes, the recession, high crime rates and diseases, which he is obviously using to gain support from working class whites who like the rest of us feel the pressure of the weakening economy. Hitler did the same thing in Germany back in '36. David clearly contradicted his earlier claims of not being a racist, especially when he wrote "If it isn't white, waste it", threatening to eventually "Blitzkrieg" the "U" with his racist organization. Too close to Hitler for comfort.

A.R.A. mobilizes at the "U"

Not wasting any time at getting David off campus Anti-Racist Action called for an open meeting on September 27th to organize as many of the student cultural unions and individual students in a united effort to stop David's recruiting efforts.

From 150 to 200 people of widely diverse backgrounds came to voice their concerns and discuss how racism and bigotry affected their lives, and to decide what actions would be taken to oppose the "White Student Union" After a couple of hours of heated discussion a decision on a name was made, thus the spawning of the Coalition Against White Supremacy (C.A.W.S.). Not shortly after, the first demonstration was planned for the following week on campus. The final step was organizing, which went underway immediately.

Students rally against the White Student Union

The demonstration happened on October 9th in front of Northrop Plaza. The security team showed up early to discuss tactics and set up the P.A. equipment and banners. While we were setting up, Tom David showed up sporting a green flak jacket, accompanied by six of his followers. One of them was identified as Derrik Schmauer, a known Klansman and organizer of the ultra-fascist Northern Hammer Skins. One of them waved a forty-eight starred "Amerikan" flag. Announcing he'd like to apologize, David passed a flier out filled with Nazi sarcasm. Taking a place on the steps

in attempt to intimidate us, they found themselves face to face with vehement opposition to their presence, as the security team surrounded them, thus isolating them from the crowd. Meanwhile, people started to fill the plaza as the speakers started. 500 people turned out to let David know that he and his groupies were not welcome at the "U". Two hours of speakers from various student organizations spoke, including Anti-Racist Action, the Young Socialist Alliance, the University Gay Community, Progressive Students Organization, and many others as well. The demonstration ended as the security team surrounded the nazis, causing them to have to move. They were escorted off campus as a good number of people followed them, shouting "Racist, Sexist, Anti-Queer; Nazi scum get out of here!!!" All the way David feigned victory while escorted by cops for protection. He had clearly lost, and he knew it. They were followed all the way to their car to make sure they left promptly.

A.R.A. shouts down Tom David

Assuming that David has the right to free speech, various student groups invited him to debate his views in a public forum on October 14th. A.R.A. was not in support of this forum, as there is no justification for racism at all. Being excluded purposely from this event for obvious reasons, A.R.A. decided that there was no way they would let him speak, therefore planning to disrupt him when he spoke. A leaflet was made inviting people to help "shout down" David. Before the debate the leaflets were passed out and about 25 disrupters sat strategically around the auditorium in Coffman Union. Nearly 300 people showed up for the debate. In all there were six panel speakers including David, each having ten minutes to state their platform before debating. David was fifth to speak, the only racist on the panel. His turn came up and on his cue he was assailed verbally, drowning out his words. Was he furious, and it showed. He barely



ever got a word in, but what he did say is this "This is, to me, a holy war, and I will fight for my race, even to the death! I fight not for the masses of white men, but for the select few! I fight for the Goethes, the Nietzsches, and the Beethovens!" Meanwhile the audience which claims to despise racism defended David, saying he had a right to free speech, trying to pacify the disruptive people. Failing to realize that "free-speech" is not the issue, and in light of social conditions in this land, it doesn't apply. It didn't matter that much since A.R.A. had accomplished what it set out to do, let it be known that there is no compromise in the fight against racism. There was no debate, since David stormed out of the auditorium with a police escort. By all and any means necessary we will battle the Nazi menace, and until the last Nazi is gone, there will be no peace.

David was invited to be interviewed on the campus radio station WMMR at 11.00 P.M. on October 17th. Once again A.R.A. saw no point in letting racists propagate their sick ideology. That night a small group of anti-racists assembled outside the Coffman Union (the location of WMMR) to demonstrate against the interview. In addition to the demonstrators, the cops were there on David's own request, as well as David's own security force, who attacked the outnumbered and unarmed demonstrators without provocation. Armed with nun-chuks, lead pipes, chains and a Rottweiler dog the Nazis ended up hospitalizing three of the demonstrators. All the while the cops sat back as we got beaten up, then breaking up the fight, threatening to arrest the demonstrators, which is to be expected from cops.

Returning to the base, there was a discussion on what happened and what could have been done instead. While arming ourselves and getting ready to return in force, we also discussed if it was sane to go back, and questions were raised if the male factor was out on a macho violence trip, or were we going to equally seek vengeance. It was a brilliant talk since it grounded the

group and discussed what the plan of action would be. Then, piling into the cars, we went back. Too late though; as we arrived, David was leaving with his police escort. So, back to base again, another meeting to more fully discuss what next. It was decided that there needed to be a press conference the following day. Volunteers to write press releases worked till dawn getting the job done. David's wanna-be stormtroopers may have beaten us physically that time, but they were far from defeating us as we were able to achieve a lot more than senseless violence.

Ending on a good note.

Overall, the campaign against the "White Students Union" brought about a lot of good things. One, ARA received a charter as an official student organisation at the University of Minnesota while David's group remains ineligible for obvious reasons. Secondly, a lot of cooperation happened between various autonomous anarchist groups pivoting around the current rise in racism, the final result of this being the formation of a Twin Cities Anarchist Federation. Thus, building the community, we're all a part of a stronger movement, allowing more room for growth through interaction and confrontation.

An emergency response phone three has been utilized when our allies are being threatened by fascists, quickly mobilizing people to go to their aid, as has happened when Nazis were terrorizing anti-racists/anarchists in east St. Paul, in which we had to bring our friend over to Minneapolis to a safe house. Let it be known that "An injury to one, is an injury to all" and we will defend ourselves and our allies from any and all fascist attacks!





J o n n a

Interview with Jonna, a longtime activist in ARA and the Twin Cities in general, as well as one fucking cool human-being. Interview by Joel, with a groggy chris crisis present.

Joel: Why don't you tell a little bit about yourself first.

Jonna: Well I grew up all over the place because my mom was a hippy artist. She was poor, real poor, so we lived in this big red truck named Betsy with a dog named Beast. I was born in Brooklyn, then we moved to living in a tent in upstate New York, then we went on the road. We moved to Soho, Ohio, on farms, in cities, in the forest. We moved here in the middle of fifth grade. That's kind of how I grew up. I'm Jewish by heritage, which is really important to me, to remember my culture, but I think the religion is really patriarchal, hierarchical and doesn't really offer much empowering, but the culture itself does, because it's a really great culture of resistance to fascism. I'm queer and I came out when I was 13 as a raging lesbian separatist and I hated men and anything that had to do with men, and that led me to being a radical activist. Now I'm in a pretty longterm heterosexual lovership and that is really interesting (laughs). I like him a lot; it's very hard. He is a very good friend, and that's probably why it sometimes works.

Joel: Why don't you explain a little bit about what ARA is and what it's doing.

Jonna: Well, ARA has changed a lot since its first inception. What ARA was was a group of young, working class, multi-racial skinheads called the Baldies. They emerged as a response to a group of Nazi skinheads called the White Knights, who were organizing in Minneapolis. The Baldies wanted a more broad-based resistance to the Nazis, so they created Anti-Racist-Action. It didn't turn out to be very broad-based, though. It was very internal and very macho, very male dominated. That's how the Baldies were, period. But they were very successful in beating out

the Nazi skinheads, which is so incredible, and they were youth and organizing as youth. They held press conferences, they did a lot of propaganda, a lot of education, they did a lot of great things.

Joel: What's ARA now?

Jonna: ARA now is still a pretty youth-based organization. It's much, much broader. Still pretty white but there are a couple people of color. It addresses oppressions including racism, sexism and homophobia and heterosexism and class. What we are trying to do is understand how all these oppressions intersect, perpetuate each other, feed off each other, and in order to fight racism we need to fight all the oppressions together. ARA has a very anarchic way of organizing and working within the group. There are queers within the group, people from different class backgrounds, people who have dropped out of high-school, people who have their bachelor's degrees and are on to their master's. The level of militancy is still pretty high.

Joel: What's ARA doing right now?

Jonna: Right now ARA is embarking on an incredible adventure with a new structure, which I'm very hopeful about. We're dividing up into three smaller groups so we can be more rooted into community activism. I think it's really important to be rooted into communities, because that's who we are. We are accountable to our community and our community is accountable to us, and it's where we draw strength from.

Joel: Where are these communities?

Jonna: These communities are in South Minneapolis, the University of Minnesota and the east-side of St. Paul. The reason why it's specifically the east-side of St. Paul is that it's a really large Nazi stronghold. So these three groups will be meeting autonomously, but we'll also be meeting as a large group every other week to talk about strategy. We are going to be caucusing with oppressed and oppressor groups and then we are going to be talking about things like how me, as a queer, working with heterosexuals, how do we together fight racism while still addressing homophobia and heterosexism. The world is ours!



Ted Soqui/Impact Visuals

The LA uprising is one of the consequences of emphasizing military might at the expense of social and industrial policy.



Joel: You strongly emphasize the connections and interplay among all the oppressions. Why then the name Anti Racist Action? Why the emphasis in your name?

Jonna: Well, I didn't choos the name.

Joel: But a lot of things in ARA are geared around racism too.

Jonna: Yeah. Well., my visions are always toward complete revolution and how to build a revolutionary movement, and I feel as a white person, in order to 'build a revolutionary movement, I really need to work on fighting racism cos right now genocide is being committed against people of color, and that's a really big priority to me. Also, the group came about and was modelled after Anti Fascist Action in England. I would like the group to eventually be Anti Fascist Action, but I think the whole idea of what fascism here in the United States is, people don't really understand it yet, and so we really couldn't call ourselves that, yet.

Joel: How did you become involved in ARA?

Jonna: I was in a group called the Revolutionary Anarchist Bowling League, and we were trying out a new structure of breaking down into bowling teams, and one of the bowling teams was an anti-racist bowling team. We decided that maybe it would be a good idea to start ARA up again, because at that time it had dissolved. One of the guys in RABL was also a Baldie- Kieran- So he called up some Baldies and we called up some other people and we had our first meeting together. It was also in response to a lot of racist incidents that had been happening, like Tyce Nelson, who was shot in the back and killed by police.

Joel: ARA has a somewhat controversial stand on violence. Why don't you explain it. Why is ARA NOT non-violent and what is the need for violence?

Jonna: Because we believe that people need to survive, and that in order to survive we need to defend ourselves and fight back, and to make a space where we can breathe and live, and create. That often means beating people out of our spaces, and out of other people's space who maybe can't do that themselves at that time. I think the reason it's so controversial is that it works. It wotks, as a tactic used with other tactics. I don't believe that beating up Nazis is the only tactic to do anti-racist work, but it is a very good tactic and we have seen it work really well. I also think that a lot of white liberals who talk about pacifism can also be construed as pretty racist, or classist, or sexist, because of those positions of power white middle-class people find themselves in. You may not ever be in a situation of a physical confrontation, but a woman on the street who has an attacker upon her who wants to rape her, what is she going to do, roll over? No, she is going to fight back, and a lot of people who have privileges don't find themselves in those kinds of confrontations, like with a nazi going, "fucking nigger, fucking nigger!" . You have to fight back.

Joel: I don't think a lot of non-violent people would have a problem with a woman fighting back in an attempted rape, but what about, say, Martin Luther King's organizational tactics, organizing broad-based movements based on non-violent strategies, which a lot of groups structure themselves around nowadays. What is the advantage in not denying the necessity of violence in mass-based organizing as opposed to the Martin Luther King

approach, which almost every group in America takes.

Jonna: Yeah. Well I think the non-violent approach is kind of unrealistic. I don't think it works. We can look, historically and herstorically, at armed movements and we can look historically and herstorically at pacifist movements and see actually what works. And also, racism is so institutionalized as well as one-on-one assaults; we're talking about bringing down a system, and that is going to take a really big, armed revolution, so you gotta build somewhere.

Joel: Do you think it's stance on violence hurts or helps ARA in its dealings with the community?

Jonna: I guess it depends on which community you talk about. It has given us a really interesting place in the progressive/radical/liberal community, where they are either afraid of us or don't take our politics seriously. We've become the disposable youth. They can ignore us because they think we're not thinking our shit out because we are using these tactics. It also creates really incredible allies, people who know this is the right thing to do because they've had to do it their whole lives.

Joel: Like who?

Jonna: Like people who're on the street. Poor people, of all different colors, and women. As far as building allies with different communities, it's really about explaining tactics and really explaining how the tactic of violence fits within a much broader analysis. I think that the more we talk about it, people will understand and support and come to build ARA or groups like ARA. People don't quite know what's up yet.

Joel: It seems to tie in a lot with class. The non-violence stance nowadays is a pretty white, privileged class thing. Another thing ARA get's a lot of shit for, especially as of laid around the University, is the freedom of speech stuff. Why don't you





explain ARA's stance on freedom of speech, because "freedom of speech" is such a sacred cow in American culture, theoretically.

Jonna: Exactly, that's the whole thing, it's theoretical. The Bill of Rights sounds like this wayrad piece of paper, but that's the thing, it is just a piece of paper. The goon squad, known as the police, who are supposedly defending what's said in this piece of paper are just doing things for their own good. The whole premise free speech is a lie, and so we are trying to reframe the whole argument. Everyone cries "freedom of speech, freedom of speech" but we don't have it, so how can it be taken away? And even if we did have freedom of speech, the power of the people in ARA... I mean we don't have very much power in the social scale in the United States so how can we silence anybody?

Joel: Explain to me your stance on freedom of speech, because obviously ARA is structurally based on everybody having an equal say and everyone having the right to speak, so that seems to very much be freedom of speech, but then on the other hand a lot of people in ARA say that freedom of speech is a myth. When you say freedom of speech is a myth, it turns a lot of people off and seems contradictory to the actual practises of ARA, so if you could make that distinction for me...

Jonna: Sure. The speech that fascists speak is preaching genocide and hate, and that is not about freedom, that is not about liberation, it is about killing people and subordination and domination and perpetuating hierarchy. The kind of free speech I want to be a part of is empowering everybody and liberation for everybody and I don't feel that by allowing fascists to speak, this is going to create true freedom for everybody. The people that invite fascists to speak on the radio or anywhere, I think that should be disrupted and not allowed to happen because it's not building toward true liberation.

Joel: Where do you draw the line? What about misogynists speaking? What about statistis speaking?

Jonna: I believe in not letting misogynists speak, too.

Joel: But that basically silences 99.9% of the United States of America.

Jonna: You have to start somewhere. We have to start somewhere. It is very unrealistic to silence, say, the porn industry. But, what we can do is encourage men and hold other men accountable for their misogyny and men organizing together to fight misogyny, like men's participation in the Take Back the Night march, and having a No Pig Zone. I think that is a very big part in silencing the cops. We can start small, like trying to shut down porn shops and boycotting them.

Joel: I think ARA really hurts itself by saying free speech is a myth, because in practice ARA is very much into letting people have their say. It seems to me that the freedom of speech issue is a structural thing, like what you were saying about misogynistic and homophobic speech. The whole idea is to empower people and shutting people up is not going to empower people, except for fascists. Fascists are fascists, they are not going to change and have to be beaten out of existence.

Chris: The whole phrase "Freedom of speech" is perverted and trademarked in America, so yeah, it is a myth in that you can't say -

Jonna: Well, freedom of speech in America assumes that we all possess the same amount of power. I mean, here comes the fascist or the nazi, and then here comes the person who is going to debate the fascist. It's assuming we are on the same level and we're not. These people (nazis) are white and totally valued in this country. They have the most access to, and the most power in this country. So here I come along, this Jewish queer

woman who is a revolutionary anarchist who is supposedly going to debate this guy. We do not have the same power and within the structure of ARA we try to be as non-hierarchical as possible, so within our meetings we can experiment with the ideas of free speech because we can actually debate each other. When you are debating a nazi you don't come at it from such an equal position. Within ARA, maybe we can start to look at it what it actually is like to have freedom of speech.

Joel: So, it is structural. Free speech assumes that people start from the same social position in society, when they really don't.

Jonna: Right.

Joel: Back to the violence thing, to jump around a bit. Do you think ARA's stance on violence excludes you as a woman in any way?

Jonna: No way!

Joel: A lot of feminist arguments assert - and the University ARA has gotten shit from women making such arguments - that not taking a non-violent stance is really macho and patriarchal.

Jonna: I think that it is so empowering for women to have control over their physical surroundings and to be able to create a space for themselves. Sometimes that means forging it out physically. Women have been stereotyped as physically weak and that even if we are strong we should appear to be weak because that makes us more desirable. I want to smash those ideas. We can be whatever we want to be and if that means being physically strong and acting upon it then we should be able to do that for ourselves. It has a lot to do with self-determination. As far as it being a macho thing, working with men and being a physical force with men, ARA has taken a lot of time out - though not as much time as I would like - in times of incredible crisis to talk about our motivations for action, like asking the men, are you clear



about why you are fighting, why you are using that as a tactic, how do you feel about not acting as defenders of the women in a group but walking with the women as allies and as equals and helping the women be as empowered as the men already are. A lot of women do not grow up getting into fistfights with their friends or wrestling so again, it's about how do we come at things from an equal place. I think it's about reframing the entire perspective. Physical fighting doesn't have to be a macho thing, it can be an action creating self determination.

Joel: How does ARA go about including women in it's activities, and does ARA do it fairly?

Jonna: (.....,unreadable....we're sorry, try and get the profane existence....) and no matter how conscious men are about being equal, about being fair, being nice, misogyny and sexism and all the oppressions are still being played out in ARA. But, as far as facilitation, as far as putting our leaflets, as far as political discussions and arguments, women are invited and take a really strong place in the group. It is now who we become, who we are. Who we have become, to have women in leadership positions, helping make decisions. We really try to be collective, and since there are women in the group, it just becomes part of the collective process.... We take things that are "women's issue" and they become ARA issues as well.

Joel: How well do you think sexism and homophobia and class is dealt with in ARA, and how well do you think people deal with it in the group?

Jonna: I think it's played out in subtle and not-so-subtle ways, in the ways people listen or don't listen or the way we interrupt each other or who's ideas are valued more than others. I think that's really where the oppression is played out. I think that we are all really scared to hold each other accountable on a personal level within the group. It's just

starting to happen but it's really scary.

Joel: What do you mean?

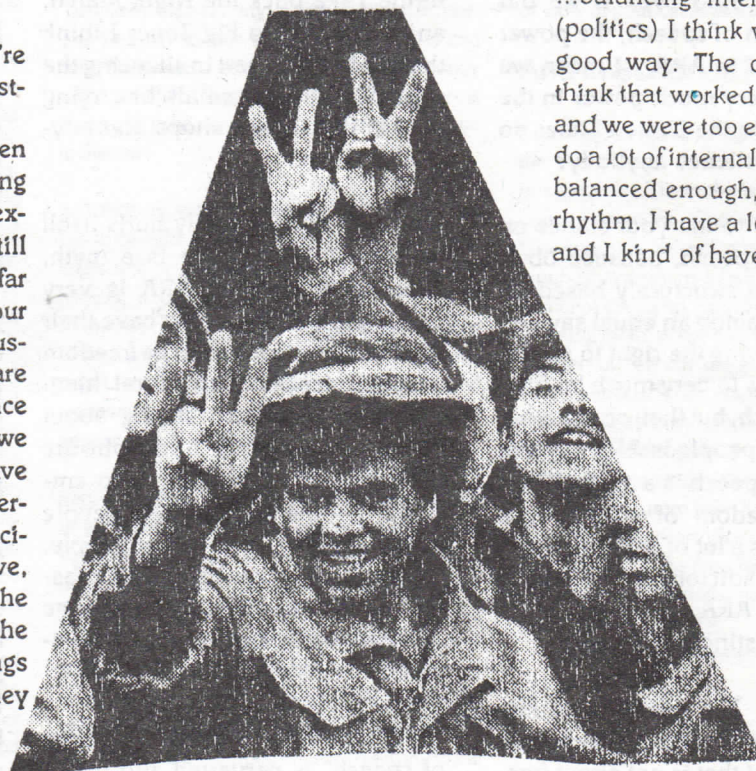
Jonna: Like, I'm really good friends with people in the group, but I'm really scared to put myself out there, and I'm so scared of appearing to be the nag or the bitch or to be taking too much time or turning ARA meetings into a therapy group. I'm really concerned about these things, but at the same time people are being silenced by these oppressions. Just by saying to you at the meeting

mouths and say: "He man, I think that's really fucked up". We really need to take these risks, we really do, and I don't think we take enough of them on an interpersonal level. I think these caucuses that we'll be having will begin to paint that out, cos I don't think we know how to do that, really. As people we're so isolated from each other in this society, we don't know how to have healthy intimacy and relate to each other in a good way.

Joel: How well would you say ARA does this?

Jonna:

(again one sentence misses.....) ...balancing internal and external (politics) I think we're moving in a good way. The only group that I think that worked better was RABL, and we were too extreme; we would do a lot of internal stuff and it wasn't balanced enough, we didn't have a rhythm. I have a lot of hope in ARA and I kind of have a lot of hope by



before last that I would prefer you saying 'queer' instead of 'gay' and this is why, that was so scary to me I was like 'Oh my god', maybe I'm silencing Joel or maybe he'll have a really hard time with me now or maybe he is feeling a lot of shame now. It becomes this really big hyped up thing, but we really need to do these simple things. We come from different realities, you know, and you may not know, that that's a hard thing for me, and it's my responsibility to let you know. Here we are, white people fighting racism, fuck, we really have to open up our

defaults because I have to have hope in something, but I do have a lot of hope in ARA. I mean the structure, I have never been in a group that's had this interesting a structure, to try to help us build analysis, build trusts, build interpersonal stuff, and actually be action-oriented and change the world we live in.



Joel: What kind of community outreach is ARA involved in?

Jonna: Not as much as I'd like. All of our fliers, literature, invites people to meetings. I think that's great. We work in coalition with other groups. I'd like to see it get a lot broader.

Joel: What directions would you like to see it take, community-wise?

Jonna: Everything. I guess my priorities are working with different communities of people of color, becoming an actual ally in their struggle for self determination.

Joel: How can we do this?

Jonna: If I had the map, Joel we would have been doing it a long time ago. Um, by walking or talk. By actually showing different communities of color that we are a good ally

to them. We can do that as white people by figuring out our stake in white supremacy and fighting to bring it down. More specifically, by going to the boat landings, by putting our bodies on the line...going to demonstrations, helping to support them in their struggles as well as doing our own thing in our own community that fights racism. By supporting queers bashing back, by making a presence at queer pride and supporting the self determination of that community.

Joel: What are some limits of ARA, organizationally and effectiveness?

Jonna: Well, we grew up in a society that taught us to be oppressors, so that really limits us until we figure out our oppressor identities and how to undo them and to be allies of the people that we oppress. Organiza-

tionally and structurally, well, we're not as big as I'd like us to be, and the more people involved the more we can do, hopefully.

Joel: Well, look at this example: We are very democratic, but it takes us a long time to make decisions. It takes us a long time to even decide when to have meetings.. Sometimes when I'm in the meetings I have a sense that this democratic proces... I'm kind of worried that it's white centered, because I can't imagine some homeboys sitting in our meetings and quickly walking out, saying, this is boring bullshit.

Chris: I's become a debate society.

Joel: Well I don't know about that. What are your thoughts on that?

Jonna: Well I don't think it's a debate society.
Tape ended here...

Kieran

anti-racist action interview with kieran frazier
interview by Joel and Chris

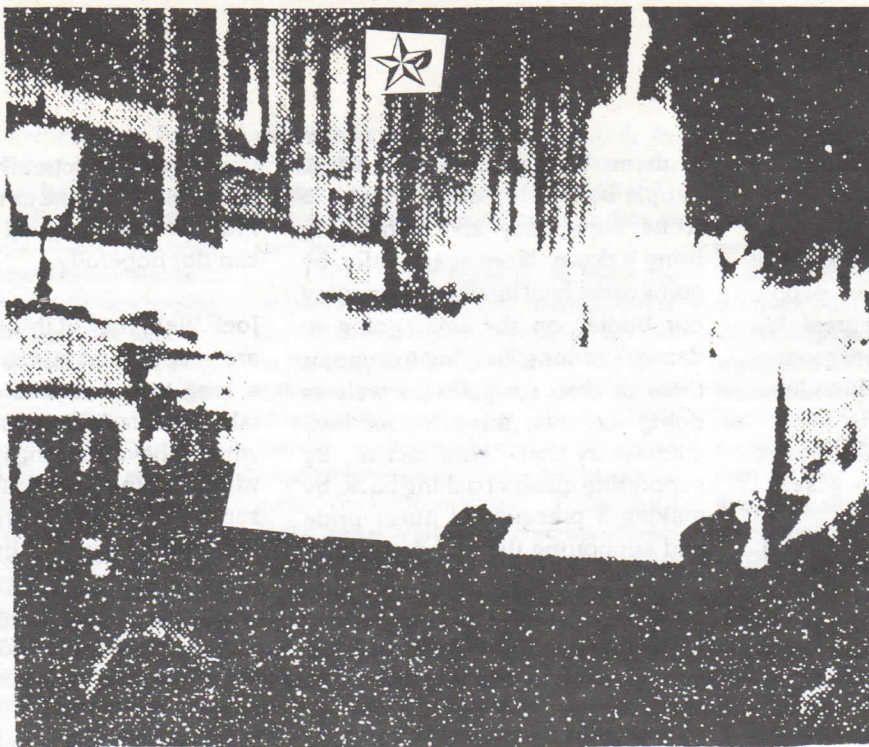


Joel: Why don't you tell us a little bit about yourself?

Kieran: My name is Kieran Frazier and I am in Anti-Racist Action. I used to be in the Revolutionary Anarchist Bowling League (R.A.B.L.). I'm a revolutionary anarchist. The main stuff I'm working

with right now is Anti-Racist Action and I just moved to the east side of St. Paul so I'll be part off the east side anti-racist action group. I'm also part of the Love & Rage projekt, I'm a member of the coordinating group.

Joel: What got you invoved in ARA? Kieran: It started out..... I was an anarchist and I've always had an interest in anti-racist stuff or black liberation stuff. When I was growing up my parents were leftists, they had stuff around the house about



Malcolm X and Martin Luther King and stuff like that, so I was really influenced by that. Also, I'm really influenced by the stuff going on in South Africa in the mid eighties. so anyway I was this anarchist with this interest in black liberation and anti-racist stuff and about the time I was about 15 or 16, I got hooked up with some of my cousins who were anti racist skinheads and they were in this group called the Baldies. Just as I was starting to hang out with them they were having this big violent split with the White Knights which was a neo-nazi group. I was really into the Baldies: I thought they were rally cool and all that stuff but also because of the politics cos I saw them standing up to those people and wanted to fight them and stuff. So that's how I really got into it, I was in the Baldies and then a year later the Baldies started Anti-Racist Action.

Joel: would you explain the structure of ARA, particularly the caucuses?

Kieran: Anti-Racist Action is reformed now, first I'll say it's quite different than the first generation of it that the Baldies started. It's definitely less than half skinheads but there's still some anti-racist skinheads in it. We've been doing some good work now for about a year and now we're in the process of reorganizing and one of the ways we're reorganizing is basing ourselves in the three communities we

have people doing work in and that's south Minneapolis or the Uptown area, the University of Minnesota, and the east side of St. Paul. Those three different groups will meet amongst themselves and work in those communities and try to organize anti-racist sentiments and also militant opposition to organized racists. I think that breakdown will make us more bases in communities. It will make us have to deal with regular people and make us have to get our arguments together better and make us depend on the people in those communities for our defense. I think it'll make us better organizers.

I also think that one of the problems that you have in a group that's mixed, that isn't just all white or just men or just wimmin or isn't just straight is that you have this problem within the group of different oppressions coming up in the group that because you know society sets men above wimmin, whites above blacks, it doesn't disappear inside our group either so how do you figure out a way to make our group as equal as we can do it? The way we're gonna try is by having caucuses within the groups so that when our group meet together wimmin have a chance to meet separately and discuss how sexism is affecting their group and men have a chance to meet separately and discuss how they can fight sexism within themselves and help support wimmin and taking more power within the group and

the same goes for whites and people of color.

Joel: Why don't you explain how the caucuses are set up.

Kieran: The four caucuses are white people and people of color, men and wimmin, queers and straights, working class and upper class or middle class. It's sort of undefined. We don't know if this will fly yet.

Joel: Each caucus is going to meet after each meeting?

Kieran: Right, our general meetings of all three subgroups are gonna be divided into two parts, one of which is sort of a strategy session where all three sub-groups discuss their long term goals and how they're progressing. The second part of the meetings will be the caucuses. The big group will divide up into one caucus for each of those group meetings so that (for example) the wimmin would divide up into the other and discuss things and then come back together as a group to discuss what was talked about in the small group.

Joel: How effective do you think these caucuses will be, especially since some people aren't always that clear about identifying themselves; say bisexuals or some people aren't sure of their class origin or things like that?



Kieran: I don't know how it'll work, it'll be a challenge for us I think and in some ways it'll make things harder but in the long run it'll make things stronger. We shouldn't be dogmatic about it either, if some kind of caucus just isn't cos it's too undefined or we've having trouble with class then we should talk about it openly and discuss the problems with it and if people are having a hard time defining stuff then they can experiment and go to each one of the caucuses or the group itself can talk about it. I think just because we set up a rule doesn't mean that rule is engraved in stone or something or that our system of organization can't change.

Joel: How have the internal politics been played out in ARA and how do you think this cuacuses are gonna effect that?

Kieran: I feel pretty good about ARA in a lot of ways as compared to a lot of other groups I've been in. I think there's not just one or two people controlling the group: ther's a lot of people who actively participate, do a lot of work and make a lot of decisions. I think, though, that there still is white people dominating, so there's some people who think there should be just a white anti-racist group, but I think white people dominate and I think men dominate too, although I should say that there's some wimmin who play really strong roles in ARA and we should support that and not deny it. So you still have a problem there, just like in society white sttraight men tend to dominate and I hope this will go towards fixing that.

Chris: Obviously not everyone can do make the same decision-making and always be there, so what about people who can't be a part of all the decision making. Are there other fields of interests to them, too?

Kieran: One thing about ARA is that it doesn't have this hard membership, we don't have membership cards. There is probably a hundred people in this city who might concider themselves ARA in one way or another but there's usually about 20 people at each meeting so

I think we have to take into account that those meetings are our base of support and not do something that's gonna alienate (the others). Also, I think that people who can't attend meetings have a number of waystaht they can make their sentiments known but I think that the people who do participate in the meetings, and hopefully with this sub-group structure a lot more people will participate...just by relating how you feel about ARA to the people who come to the meetings, and there's a number of other things. ARA doesn't just have meetings they have other stuff, too, like chase nazis and put up flyers.

Kieran: Yeah, help people out. Hopefully we'll have some concerts

Chris: Hopefully stop some fascist concerts as well.

Kieran: We made a flyer last night and got it translated into three different languages - Spanish, Hmong and Vietnamese. We decided not to try and stop the concert at the day of the concert so we're gonna try and do this picket a couple of days before. (the flyer was made up to let people know about a concert that was organized by a known KKK member from the east side of St. Paul. The bill was to include the racist naziband Bound for Stupidity, or, umm....Glory? The show was called off due to the efforts of ARA and members of the community - tod).

Joel: I'd like to talk about your own power in ARA. You've been around for a long time, you're one of the original members of the Baldies, a lot of people respect you and look up to you. How do you feel about your power in ARA, beyond being a white male?

Kieran: I think it all goes together, too. I think that because I've been around for a long time and because I'm a white male I think I've a disproprtionate amount of power within the group. So this fucking sucks, I think about all the time and

I try and figure out cos I think that if I say I don't like an idea I think that has more weight than if someone else said that and that's a really fucking thing.

Chris: Do people look up to you as the leader of the groop?

Kieran: Sometimes that happens. I try and take distance sometimes. I'm sure there's similar problems with Profane Existance or with any kind of group. I think that one thing about anarchists is that anarchists try and recognize that htere is a problem of people looking to a leader: you're trained to look at someone else not yourself. I think that it's important that anarchists really try to refuse that role, which doesn't mean being irresponsible, it means not pretending they have all the answers and trying to encourage other people to take power, to share some of the skills you have like writing leaflets or talking to people, fighting. That's really important.

Joel: I notice sometimes in the meetings that you do check yourself and I think you do a really good job of it, but I also don't always think it's so bad to have people who have experience and have knowledge and you have a lot and you're a pretty clear thinker. If it's like "Kieran's not here we can't have a meeting", then it's a big problem, but I don't necessarily think that some role figures are too bad and I think that you do a really good job.

Kieran: You know it's so... I don't know...fuck, I mean I don't know.... fuck, it feels good that you say that but I notice there's times like I'll catch myself, like someone will say "Well, what do we do?" and I'll just feel like I have to have an answer even though I don't in my head. It's like "I always have answers so I must have an answer now", and I'll just spit something out and I'll be like "why did I say that, I haven't thought about this, what gives me the right to always think I have an answer?". So I really appreciate you thinking that I'm doing a good job and stuff but I think there's totally



that mentality that sinks in that people are depending on you and shit like that so you have to constantly think of that.

Chris: Is our interviewing Kieran just another sign of people looking to him as a leader?

Joel: That's a good question and Kieran had those reservations about it when I first asked him about it. Do people call you on it in ARA? Do they say you're taking too much power?

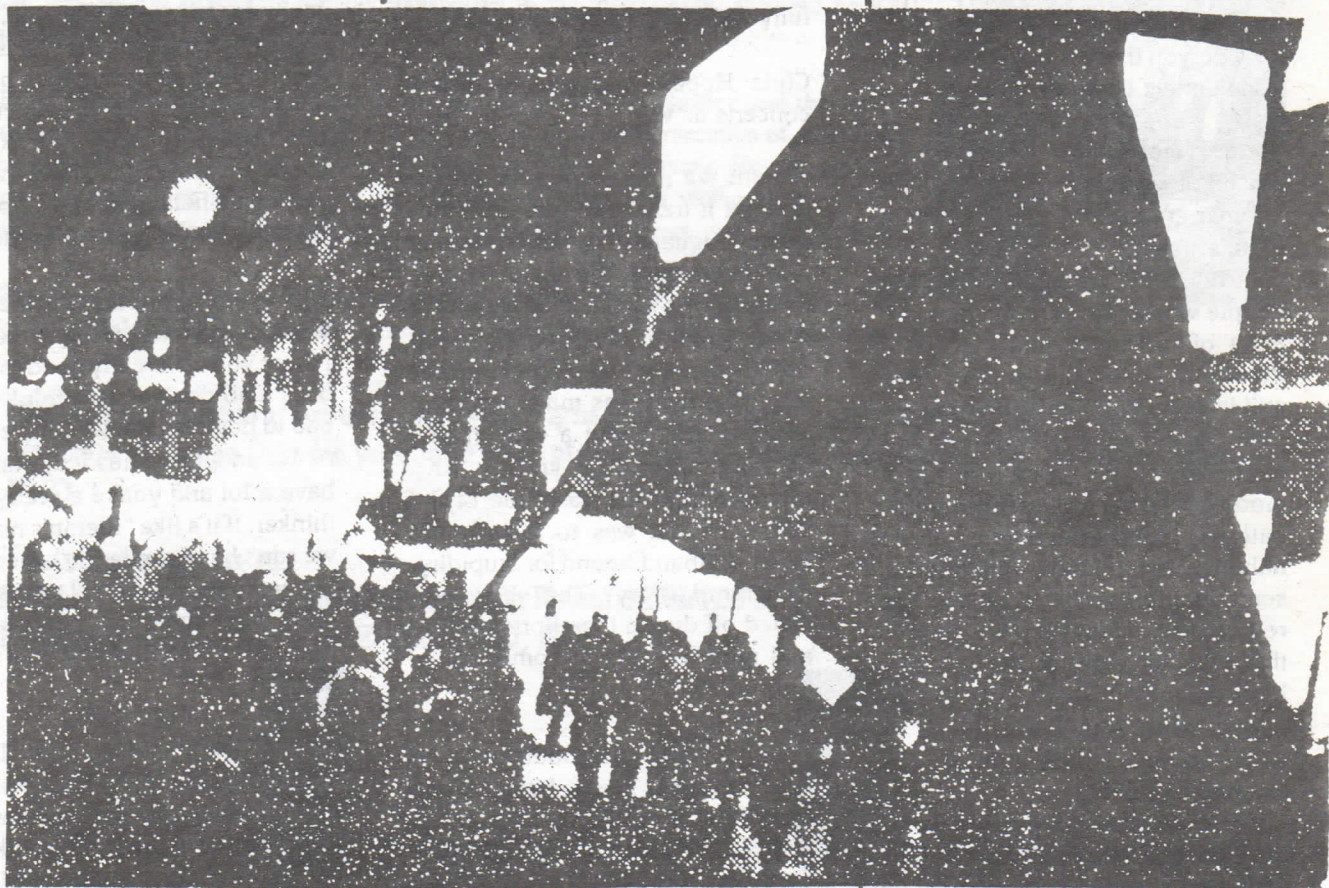
Kieran: Sometimes they do, in different ways. This one member of ARA would always oppose anything I said. It got to be so annoying but it

Joel: It just seems like you're never gonna get rid of these power relations, there's always gonna be people with more experience and anytime a newcomer comes into the group there's always gonna be those feelings of discomfort and there's always gonna be those who are a little more clear thinking and have a little more background. These problems are perpetual. They always have to be dealt with.

Kieran: A lot of communist groups recognize the same thing we're talking about, too, and then they make these people the official leaders, which means they have a say in all kind of things that maybe they don't have any experience in and they

but you know, a few days later I'll recognize it and say: That was really good that it happened. The whole deal with people who have more experience...I have more experience in some ways than other people but I don't have more experience in other ways than a lot of people. Like, we're putting out a zine now, and I don't have any experience in that, and if I was to dictate how to run the zine because I have more experience in fighting or whatever, that would be really fucked up.

Joel: How well do you think ARA deals with internal things: sexism, racism, homophobia?



was good too, it was mainly just because he wanted to question anything that came from anyone with some sort of authority and that person sort of has some authority within the group as well. It was cool, it was a hard struggle, and people do...like if I say something stupid or if I say something sexist I don't get away with it.

make decisions for other people on the basis that they have experience in one area. I think what revolutionary anarchists do, or should do, is we see the same things, but we say if we really want to change society than we have to challenge those things constantly, and it gets to be a fucking pain in the ass. I really get defensive when people criticize me,

Kieran: I think we still got a long way to go but I think it's something that's on the table. When someone brings it up at a meeting it's not like no one's ever heard of it before. People recognize that if that goes down, something is going to be said about it. It's still a drag.

Chris: Isn't that kinda what the group exists for, too?



Kieran: Yeah, cos if we're going to be truly anti-racist that means confronting those things within us too. That's the whole trick of the system, they've got this in our head. We've got a long way to go but there are wimmin who play prominent roles in ARA, there's a lot of wimmin in the group, there's a lot of queers in the group. There's not a lot of black people and that's probably the main area, there's a number of black people who have come through the group. I think some of it is because it's such a white group. So it's a question, do we think we should become a multi-racial group or do we think we should be mostly a white group that organizes white people to be against racism, which I don't think is bad either. We have to figure out which one it is. It's a weird thing. I don't think we should say we're a white group only cos a lot of black folks, like a lot of black punks or black kids that are involved in sub-cultures that are mostly white will come around to something like this before they come around to say some black nationalist thing or like black feminists.

Chris: So it should be multi-racial.

Joel: I think class comes into it.

Kieran: A lot of things come into it. One thing that Malcolm X said was like this white womyn came to him all upset cos she just heard him speak and she was like "I really hate racism, I want to do something" and at the time he told her, Get the fuck away from me, I don't want to deal with some crying white student, but later he said that what he should have said was we need you, we need you to go to white people, other white people and you need to fight racism, cos it's in our interests too. I believe racism is the main pillar that makes the US structures different from the rest of the world's systems. What holds the US system up the most is white supremacy. Starting from the very beginning with the first slaves in the colonies here there were white and African slaves. There was no such thing as

racism in the way it exists now. The landowning colonists created an ideology of white supremacy. People aren't born with the shit, they created it to divide the white slaves from the black slaves... What the landowning colonists did is they gave the white slaves privileges over the black people; they let some of the white slaves or white servants be the managers of the black slaves, they let them get more food. - So that's basically what's going on in this society, it's that white people are kissing ass to the ruling class and getting paid for it. They're getting little privileges, not much but they're getting a bit. A lot of times at work you wonder why does this person kiss ass, they're not getting anything from it; they're just getting a little bit. That's basically what's up. It's that white people are kissing ass to this system instead of uniting with black people and I think it's really important for people to convince other white people to stop kissing ass and to join with black people cos black people have torn it up in this country a number of times,



they have burned down sections of every city in this fucking country and with most black people you can have a conversation about hating cops or hating your job and it's just natural, people totally agree with you. We have to convince other white people, especially white working class people that their interests are not with the white bosses but with black folks in general. So that's why I think our main job is to be convincing black people to become anarchists or is it convincing white people to become anti-racist.

Chris: Anti-racist anarchists... I think there's a weird thing in middle class white america. People are taught to

be afraid of black people and the black community and the inner city cos that's what the media says... crime...murder...death...auto theft... and I find that right down to the anti-racist subculture. Say I live on 15th and Park or Pleasant and 25th and people ask me where I live and I go live on 25th and Pillsbury, people go "Oh, that's a bad neighbourhood," when it's not that bad, it's a neighbourhood, it's where people live and are trying to survive and barely scrape by, it's where governments and systems pack everybody in, so how do we stop that kind of internal racism?

Kieran: It's a good question. The propaganda is thick. You're totally right about the media the way they talk about neighbourhoods being bad is directly related to how many black people live in that neighbourhood. That's how the neighbourhood is determined bad or good. I think one thing for any kind of white person that is into radical stuff - I think there's not enough of this in the anarchist community and it sort of reflects how white we are - is to like if you're a radical in the US and you don't know about the black liberation movement it's something you should find out about. It's a movement that is... it totally makes you appreciate the struggles of black people. It may break down some of the propaganda that the media feeds you about black people because you see this incredible movement in the South starting out in the fifties and early sixties. It had all these weird influences, christianity and pacifism, but they also held huge mass meetings in churches. It had some real democratic influences, a lot like worker's counsels that a lot of anarchists point to in Europe. These black folks were making decisions and now the US media holds up Martin Luther King but people used to scream at him and say "We're not pacifists anymore!" and all this stuff like "We need guns!". There were these huge democratic movements and millions of people were involved in law breaking, purposeful law breaking in this country. Anarchists don't know enough about



it, we don't know how to talk about it, we don't have an analysis of it and that's really detrimental to us cos it was this huge movement and then as the sixties progressed you had black bond organizations springing up in this country and they had a base. They could go and hide the projects, they could travel from safe house to safe house. That's something that white radicals can't do yet cos we don't have that base of support. And then the riots in the sixties when Martin Luther King was killed; there were riots in 160 cities. It happened the day Martin Luther King was killed so you can't just say: "Oh, it was hot, people were pissed off". It was a political riot. Martin Luther King was killed and cities burned, including north Minneapolis. People don't know about that. You shouldn't turn black people into this deity, black people are just like any people. They're fucked and they're good and they're everything. The struggle is so amazing to me.

Joel: What about other cultures?

Kieran: I think native struggles are especially important in Minneapolis cos AIM (American Indian Movement) was based here, this is where it started.

Chris: They were a counterpart to the Black Panthers originally, weren't they?

Kieran: They sort of modeled themselves after the Black Panthers. In a lot of ways they had similarities. There's a lot of anti-authoritarian sentiment within the Native American community, like Leonhard Peltier. I don't know if you know about Freedom Now, the posters that said: "Face reality: there are political prisoners in the US". Freedom Now was basically run by nationalists and white anti-imperialist communists and they weren't recognizing some anarchist prisoners like Larry Giddings and some other people and Leonard Peltier said if you don't recognize them you can't use my name. And he's the most famous political prisoner. The reason why is because when he was

first in prison the white people who supported him most were the anti-authoritarians and anarchists. I think it is really important that we continue that and learn from that struggle. It's really important to recognize the black liberation movement as key to the struggle in the US. It was the black struggle in the sixties that sparked the white anti-war movement, the white wimmin's movement in this country. Both learned lessons from the black movement and put those into effect and in every struggle the most radical part of it is usually the black folks. In worker's struggles it's black workers who take things the farthest. In the wimmin's movement it's black wimmin who are pulling things out the farthest.

Joel: Do you think the direct democratic, really slow-paced organizational structure of ARA is one reason why it's mostly a white organization? Do you think ARA's structure is kind of a white middle class thing?

Kieran: I don't think anarchism is a middle class thing, I don't think democracy is, but I think, from our experiences, the way we talk and act probably has some of that wrapped up in it.

Chris: So it's kind of socialized?

Kieran: Yeah, the black people that come in there probably feel like they have to talk a certain way, have to act a certain way even though none of us are saying that. It's just that the system is so ingrained, I think it's a real challenge. There is an issue though of black people organizing in the same kinds of ways but I think there's just a real difference in how people talk and how people act. We have to fight those kinds of middle class nicey nice ways of doing stuff within our group in order to make it a place where black people feel comfortable.

Joel: I just imagine some crips coming into a meeting saying "What's this? You guys are arguing twenty minutes and raising hands over when the meeting's gonna be!"

Kieran: It'd be really frustrating and I think a lot of people feel uncomfortable with raising hands and shit like that so you have to figure out a way in which you can do it, and maybe the sub-groups will be small enough that they'll be able to do it another way, but I think it's really true that in these kinds of groups.... cos at the Baldies meetings we never had a facilitator and people just talked, everyone interrupted each other, the subject changed with every person talking, we couldn't get anything done or decided on, it was total chaos and people just got to spit out what they were thinking but it didn't get discussed or talked about. So I'm all for experimenting with different ways of doing stuff but I'm just real skeptical of trying to do it without facilitators right now because it just ends up being really non-democratic where the people who are the loudest get heard and the people who just want to spit something out spit something out. I think you're right, people who have never been in that type of meeting situation will be frustrated by it.

Joel: Is ARA a revolutionary organization?

Kieran: I think for a lot of purposes it's good to not put that out on an ARA letterhead or on an ARA sticker because I think there's a lot of people who hate racism who don't know what's up with revolution. I don't think ARA should be a front group for anything but I think it should be a place, a broad group where people from off the street can join if they agree to fight racism and also fight other stuff and are ready for direct action or support direct action. I think most people in ARA are revolutionaries and I hope that continues.

Joel: Do you think ARA has the potential to attract a mass base?

Kieran: Yeah I think it does. Out of all the political groups in the Twin Cities right now ARA has the most potential. Within the times right now, 1991, things are not too great on the political scene. We don't have mass movements of a lot of people, we have mass movements of like dozens of people or like hundreds of

people and ARA has dozens of people and it's getting bigger. We can mobilize people, we're still learning how to but we're one group that can mobilize people and I think part of that is because the anarchist movement has really tried to build it and I think that's really good. Before you came here, Joel, there was a lot of sectarianism between the different anarchists, like RABL, Profane Existence, AYF and the Youth Greens, people really bickering. There was this attempt at anarchist forums and it ended up breaking up. One thing about ARA is like you look around the room and a lot of the time you see ex-RABL people, Profane people, AYF people and Youth Green people, a lot of anarchists, people from the different wimmin's groups that have happened and non-affiliated people and that's one thing that I think has built ARA is that anarchists have really come together around it and hopefully that can continue with TCAF (Twin Cities Anarchist Federation) and other kinds of formations. Now that we've consolidated the anarchist community around it we need to move it out of the anarchist community and start reaching people who don't know who Conflict is.....

Joel: You mean there's people like that out there?

Chris: How do we deal with new people in the group, how do you trust them when they could be infiltrators?

Kieran: That's a really hard question that I don't have the answer to. It's especially hard over on the east side of ST. Paul. Every white person who wants to join, I'm gonna be like

☆
"Who is this guy?" Basically I think the east side is gonna have to implement some kind of security. The east side ARA may have to be some sort of membership organization like to be a member you have to do more than just show up at a meeting, you have to fill out something and we have to be able to call your home and your boss and make sure you are who you say you are. Not like call your boss and ask if you're a good guy but find out if the place you're working is really the place you say you're working and find out who your friends are and stuff like that and I think if an organization's gonna be somewhat underground and somewhat above ground that's what you have to do and that's what east side ARA's gonna be like.

Chris: So should Uptown ARA and University ARA also implement some security measures?

Kieran: Yeah, they probably should. I don't know how but we need to start talking about that.

Joel: What kind of things do you think are necessary, organization wise, to build a revolutionary movement in the US?

Kieran: That's like "the question". For one thing I think there has to be a certain autonomy for each group. It becomes a fact that if we're gonna defeat the system we have to have some sort of coordination cos this is the strongest military might in the world. It's not gonna give up by each of us just pecking at it or if it does it's just gonna be burning and chaos and nothing new is gonna come of it. So how do you do that? I believe

in anarchist, federal forms of organization. I think what this ARA subgroup can be is autonomous, but with the same principles. I don't think you have to let everyone and their brother join ARA just because they want to. If someone's like "We should go bash the black Muslims because they are racist, too", I don't think that's in line with what ARA is doing. Those people can do whatever they want to do, but they can't do it under ARA's name. How a broader movement can be developed is by building collectives in every city and being part of mass movements; anarchists not just going out there and preaching "anarchy, anarchy!" because you don't prove anything to anyone. You don't

prove how anarchism works. You prove that anarchism works by getting involved in the struggles that normal people face and you try to offer anarchist solutions, build counterinstitutions that will serve people, whether it's shelter or food or self-defense. What anarchists have to do is teach people how to do it themselves. This culture is so against people doing anything for themselves, it's really a struggle.

Joel: Do you see anything going on right now, any "window of opportunity" that anarchists can take and turn into a mass movement?

Kieran: Yeah, I think there's a number of mass movements anarchists could have a big presence in. In the Twin Cities, anarchists are significantly involved in only one big movement, and that's the anti-fascist/anti-racist movement among whites, and that's ARA and some other stuff. I think there's potential for anarchists to have mass influence in the radical women's movement and the abortion rights movement, in the queer liberation movement, in the homeless movement, in environmental stuff, in anti-imperialist stuff. If five people sat down and said we're going to go into this movement and work, there'd be some potential there.

(a big thank you to Jonna and Kieran for their help)



Racial hatred in Germany - It once started like this Antiracist and antifascist resistance in Germany

This article is written by some left-radical antifascist/antiracist people in Germany. The article shall be a summary about the situation here, it's meant to show the different political methods and experiences made by the antifascist/ antiracist resistance in the last two years. It's important to honour the situation like it is right now, to understand the problems of the left-radical resistance.

After the realisation of the reunification there was a big run on radical right wing neonazigroups, which also meant a rising number of violent attacks against foreigners, gays, lesbians and leftist people. In 1991 the discussion to change article 16 of the German statute (concerning refugee rights) started, at the same time more and more people started to take part in actions against refugee's camps. We don't think this being just a casual event but a result - an intended result - a result of an unsocial, capitalistic policy, which needed a valve. Groups of people have to be guilty for social problems, unemployment, drugs etc, a very simple picture of an enemy was painted - and a simple solution followed: openly fascist by the Neonazis with paroles like "foreigners out" and "Germany belongs to the Germans" and militant and murdering attacks on refugee's camps, homes and on the streets. The political parties did it in a more subtle way, they started the debate on the asylum rights to change the human rights and they used terms like "flood of refugees" and "refugee of economy". They formed the ideological basis for the open fascist attacks. It caused an active participation of usual people in heavy actions against refugees and their houses, and it caused a move to the radical right wing parties in elections. The conclusion of the traditional parties was to move to the radical right wing stances and to force the asylum debate inside the parliament. To reach the challenge of building a common racist consensus the ruling parties were willing to cooperate with the fascists in this way. They need this common racist consensus to force their struggle for EEC'92 and closed borders round Europe... Even if it doesn't fit inside it in a good way, they use nationalism and neonazism to come forward.

The role which usual people played, changed in the last year, this can be proved by some characteristic events:

-In September 91 organised Neonazis were attacking a refugee's home in Hoyerswerda for 3 days while neighbours were giving applause to them.

-In Mannheim-Schönau the people didn't need the organised fascists any more, they decided to attack the refugee's home on their own. They also attacked people showing their solidarity with the refugees. Neonazis tried to force the racist people to be more active, aggressive. (May/June 92)

-August 92 in Rostock similar to Mannheim usual people start to attack a refugee's home, but the number of participants and spectators is higher this time, about 2000-3000 racists who are more or less in a way active in attacking the refugee's homes or covering the fascists against the police. The organised militant neonazis which take part actively, are very welcome. Many normal people leave the "democratic" way and use heavy violence. The only reaction of the state was no reaction, the police had information about the planned attack some days before but didn't react at all. These events are only the most brutal form of racist and fascist terrorism, which can be seen on the street, in front of refugee camps. The state racism in its end, is not less brutal. Open racism is followed on a higher level, with new refugee laws, faster deportations and closed borders.



To prove the fascist structure of the state, the police arrested and threatened 60-70 antifascist activists in Rostock after a demo against the progromes, while some hundred meters away nazis burned down the first flats. That's what they call "democracy", they use the word to brake through the interests of a ruling class, but "democracy" is not the principle of their behaviour. Each radical left resistance and revolutionary movement is attacked or gets criminalized and imprisoned. These attacks are based on their "democracy", the attacks of the fascists are based on the asylum debate. They get "legalized" because the state does not interfere. Finally the government arrested some of the fascists to show the will to do something against this progromes. All political parties condemned the neonazis and their actions.

During the last two years several initiatives were set up by antiracists, challenged to interrupt the political development like it is. In some cities activists and refugees squatted churches or parts of a university, to keep the refugees safe, and to fight for their right to stay in Germany. Small efforts for a few refugees were made, but most demands were not fulfilled by the government. Many problems appeared during the practical work with the refugees. In the cooperation people got confronted with racism and sexism inside their own structures. This caused difficulties in the relation among each other. The question about the motivation to work with refugees appeared in the radical left groups.

The activists who worked on this subject started to talk about their problems at the counter congress against the G7 summit in Munich. We hope to get more infos about their discussions and conclusions.

- Since Rudolf Hess died on the 17.8.1987 a big remembrance demonstration takes place in Wunsiedel/Bavaria every year. It became a meeting point for organised Nazis from all over the world. The different radical right wing groups show unity there. During the last two years more and more "usual" German nationalists and more and more fascists from all over the world are taking part. Since its beginning a big antifascist mobilisation was trying to stop this meeting. In the last years the antifa-groups started to pick up the fight against state racism and spreading nationalism, racism and sexism inside the society in a broader way.

The important questions here are: How to organise an antifascist/antiracist self-defence and a militant acting? As they are: How to integrate this into the policy of allies? Further questions don't just concern the antifascist/antiracist movement, but the whole movement for revolutionary changes: Where are the starting points for revolutionary changes, if it should be more than attacking the fascist movement or the ruling system?

- The attacks against refugee-camps are not only on the initiative of Neonazis, but also on the German people. The hate of the under classes of the population goes off in racial terror and attacks against refugee-camps. The hostile atmosphere and the ill-humour against foreigners and refugee-camps are turning into a terrorlike program. All over Germany, people are forming "citizen-initiatives" against refugee-camps and the "flood of foreigners". Since Hoyerswerda activists in the antifascist/antiracist resistance are expressing their opinion massively in the solidarity to the refugees and are trying to show their own attitude against the racial hunt and terror at the camp. Inside the left-radical resistance there are different opinions about the confrontation with racial-terror-doing citizens. On one hand there's the problem, to show the racists their limits clearly and to enforce this with counter-power or to defend this limit also against the police. On the other hand there's the opinion to avoid the direct confrontation, because there's no possibility to fight massively against the racists, when they are doing their racial terror. But there's the opinion to set up the price of the confrontation very high and to look for the confrontation with the responsible politicians.

So there are the questions: How could a confrontation with the racist citizens look like, beyond the opinion to smash the racial terror or to look for "reasons" for a program and to explain it instead of fighting against it? How can a policy be developed, which names and attacks the political responsible lobby and to cut the ground (the state policy, media-propaganda and to work with the fascists) under the feet of the open racism at the same time?

This decision can be made with the showing of perspectives of life, in opposition to the ruling system. At the same time the reactionary and fascist forces are the most powerful to "solve" innerpolitical problems. This is also the basis, which sharpens the wars on the international level. The revolutionary changes have to aim at the circumstances of life of the people, if the social inconvenience, which are impressed by racism, sexism and homophobia, shall change, so that a life free of sovereignty without oppression and exploitation can be realized.

For International Solidarity !
The dignity of the people will live !

Protest is to say I don't agree to this and that. Resistance is to fight the things I don't agree to.

The following article is taken from a German leftist newspaper (Arbeiterkampf, the issue from July). It was written by an Antifascist living in Mannheim. We add it here, because we think some problems of the recent development are pointed out in a comprehensive (and in a fair) way.

We demand the immediate release and rehabilitation of Gerhard Boegelein!

The 22nd criminal division of the Court of Hamburg convicted the 69 years old Gerhard Boegelein to life imprisonment at the 18th of May '92. The grounds for the Court were: malicious murder on a former Nazi-judge in the army in the year 1947.

This verdict is atrocious in various ways:

- the same Gerhard Boegelein, now convicted to life, was an active fighter in the resistance against German fascism; he refused to obey orders, deserted, joined the Red Army and fought on Soviet side against fascism.
- the Nazi-judge of the army that was killed undersigned between 120 and 170 death-penalties in the years '43-'45 and remained to be a loyal Nazi even in 1947,
- the court-investigation was mainly based on research and witness-reports produced by a former Nazi civil judge in the beginning of the fifties.
- almost every witness of the state-prosecutor was a dedicated Nazi. Gerhard Boegelein himself denies being guilty of the accusation.
- Gerhard Boegelein was a citizen of the GDR until the unification of both German states and was shortly afterwards forcibly transported to jail in Hamburg, although he was seriously ill and not fit for imprisonment.

The arrest, the ongoing imprisonment since Dec.1990, the accusation and the verdict against this old anti-fascist are unbearable signs of a belated persecution of anti-fascist resistance against the Nazi-regime. The trial itself is an example for the post-war German attempt to falsify history, making Nazi-criminals into victims and people, which actively resisted fascism and made the murderers pay, into criminals.

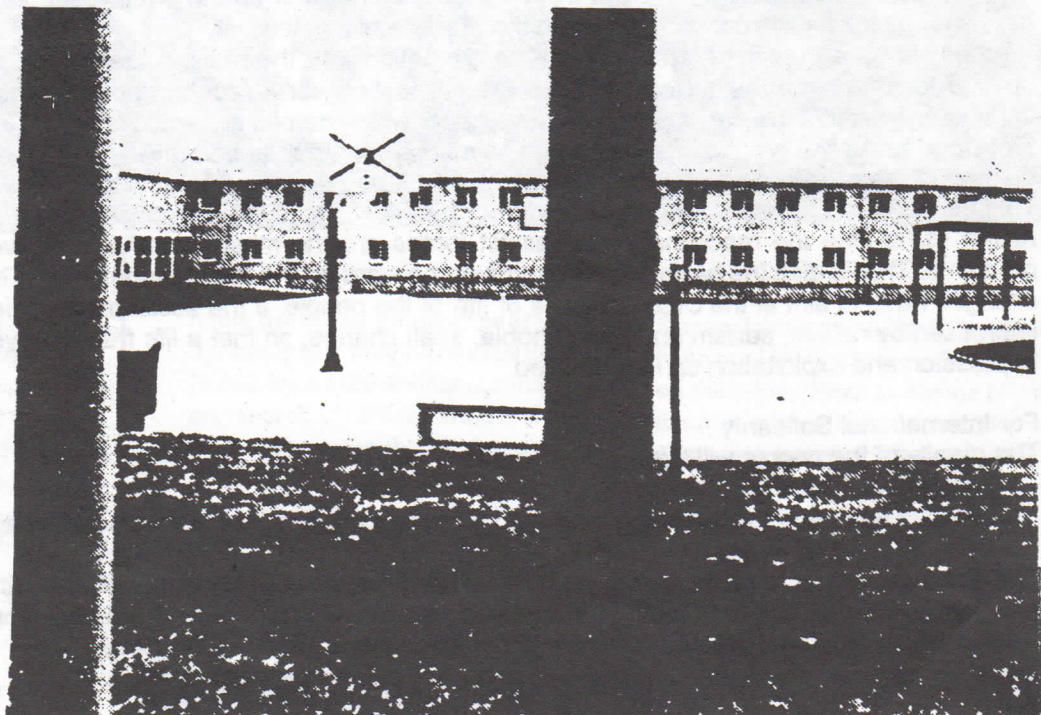
We are outraged and shocked by this verdict and call upon all democratic and anti-fascist people inside and outside Germany, to intervene for the immediate release and



Please send letters of protest, with your signature, to the support group Kielhorn/Boegelein:
c/o Projektgruppe fuer die vergessenen Opfer des NS-regimes, Lindenallee 54, 2000 Hamburg 20,
BRD

Financial support to:

Solidaritaetskonto Gerhard Boegelein Konto 1228/128 938,
Hamburger Sparkasse BLZ 20050550, BRD



MANNHHEIM-SCHOENAU

HOYERSWERDA IS CONTAGIOUS!

What's the difference between Hoyerswerda and the part of Mannheim known as Schoenau? First and foremost: Hoyerswerda, in the former GDR got national and international publicity in the Autumn of 1991 when the refugee camp there was subjected to pogrom-like attacks. The siege of the camp for asylum seekers in Schoenau by a racist mob of citizens, which has been going on for weeks now since the end of May has hardly been reported on at all: this could be due to this kind of thing having become "normal" in Germany, or because the media has embarked on a course of deliberate self-censorship (for the sake of Germany's international reputation), or even because the state now has a strategy of deliberately diverting public attention (on "chaotic left-wing commandos") and to sweep the real political content, the active racism of "normal" citizens under a brown carpet.

suburb of Mannheim. The scene of the crime: Lilienthal Road in front of the staging camp, a former barracks, where approx. 250 refugees have been put up since February 1992 for four weeks at a time. The scene: The approximately 40m wide entrance is guarded by a police line (In the course of the evening more police moved up from inside the camp, who we could not see at this time.). The perimeter fence has been reinforced by a second fence inside the camp; the windows to the street have also been covered with wire mesh. The occupants, mostly people from war-torn Yugoslavia, Kurdistan or Ghana only dare to watch the goings on in front of their camp at a distance with frightened and bewildered faces. The goings on with their mixture of brutality and "normality" are more than enough cause for fear. About 300 people of all ages, mainly German men, are gathered with racist determination like at some kind of "happening". Here "protest voters" are

scene using a moving police line and took about 20 people into custody. This meant that the action was moved behind the police lines and the mob became angrier. Shouts of "Stasi" were heard (referring to the former East German State Security force). In this context, this meant something like: "The police are oppressing "us Germans" while we are (only) trying to express "our reasonable and justified" demands. We became aware that the mood described here was not limited to the Lilienthal Road area when we later took a walk through the streets. Two things should be noted that signify a break with Hoyerswerda. A direct attack on the building did not take place, because the police "protected" it. This did not mean protection from verbal and psychological violence. Furthermore, and that is perhaps for us even more serious, there was no need for an organized "fascho" or "hooligan" leadership in Schoenau. The German citizen got up and made a public and



Other than the lack of publicity there are other differences to the events of Autumn 1991. However, the similarities are even more serious, especially those things which have become worse. These can be regarded perhaps as new lessons for the Left on the (new) German reality and as a important matters for us to discuss. We wish to discuss here the actual events, and describe the role of the state. It is also worthwhile to talk about the reactions, arguments, uncertainties and new questions arising from the conflict with real and existing racism amongst the Left.

A racist mob - first impressions

Alarmed by the news of a pogrom-like siege of the hall of residence for refugees in Schoenau on the night before (see below) we drove on Friday night, 29.5., out to this

holding a meeting fresh off their bar stools, coming together here as (potential) thugs. "Normal" citizens in Bermuda shorts, and leisure wear, cans of beer in plastic shopping bags, wobbling beer bellies, whole families out for a summer evening's outing. Where groups of them stand together, they exude a mood of stupid self-pity and aggressive determination: "We ain't got nothing to heat with during the winter, and they get breakfast in bed every morning."; the police are protecting those who rape German women; Slogans are shouted: "We don't want any refugee pigs"; "We don't want any foreign pigs"; An exchange of opinions takes place: "The only good nigger is a dead nigger", "Right on" roars the choir. And of course: the inevitable Nazi salutes.

As the night went on, the mood became more and more threatening. Maybe this was due to the T.V film crew that had meanwhile arrived? In any case, the police later cleared the

actively racist intervention of his own accord. This also becomes clear if we describe the history preceding the above described events.

The Prologue

The Schoenau is a working class suburb in northern Mannheim. Traditionally, the SPD (Social Democrats) and the KPD/DKP were always ahead in elections (KPD = Communist Party of Germany banned under Adenauer later reconstituted under new name German Communist Party = DKP). The only remaining DKP city councillor, Walter Ebert was elected here (The role of the DKP is described below.). In the last state* elections of April 1991 however, the REPS (neo-fascist "Republicans") achieved their best Mannheim local electoral result with almost 17% of the vote in Schoenau. To associate the term working class suburb with the typical blocks of

rented flats would be incorrect in this case. For the most part, you can see here not exactly fine, but nevertheless two-storey row houses with a small front garden and four or five storey multiple dwelling units surrounded and broken up by grass lawns. That goes for both the older buildings (built at the turn of the century) and the new housing estates. On the other hand, there are some real slum blocks, one or two-bedroom flats occupied by whole families. The Gendarmerie barracks, known today as the State Camp for Asylum Seekers ("Landesunterkunft für Asylbewerber") is on the edge of town, but is still more or less part of the scenery. All in all you might normally talk of a nice middle class atmosphere, even if only as a first impression. Unemployment is higher than average. Schoenau also has an above average crime rate, which is due mainly to the drugs/dealer and pimp scene that can be found here.

The transit refugee camp was rejected from the very outset at least by large parts of the local population. Part of their "line of argument" was a speedy linking - factually groundless but fitting their racist views - of the refugees with the criminal scene mentioned above. You could read this line in any edition of the local advertising paper or in the reader pages of the local paper "Mannheimer Morgen" (Abbr = MM). How far the racist line progressed in the meantime, could be seen from the article published by the MM on 9 Apr 92 quoting what was probably at one time a left-wing social worker under the headline "Successful Youth Social Work at the Point of Collapse". In this article the social worker ranted on that the refugees were "working hand in hand with the drugs scene."

People from the Mannheim "Initiative for a Free City for Refugees" speak in this context of the worsening situation around the transit camp being more than predictable. The actual spark was however, perhaps very typical for the interchange of racism and sexism.

Things come to a head at the end of May 92

On the evening of 26. May the first (as yet small) group of mainly male Germans formed in front of the refugee camp. This was inspired by rumors of a 16 year old woman from Schoenau being raped by a refugee from the camp. It is true that a rape did take place. However, the rapist was not an occupant of the camp, but a black American from the local pimp scene who had a stolen Ghanaian passport. This was also made public by the police and city officials (in leaflets) and also in the media (MM). However, even this publicity could not halt the spread of the rumors. Everybody was talking about it in the days that followed. Mannheim women wrote in a leaflet: "The attack (on the camp) was triggered off by a rumor whereby an asylum seeker allegedly raped a woman from Schoenau. We ask ourselves: Which man otherwise gets upset about the everyday sexual attacks on women in German marital beds,

* state elections here refers to elections to the state parliament of Baden- Württemberg, Germany being a Federal Republic.

children's rooms or on the streets. Only the thought, that a 'foreigner' could rape their own woman - i.e. could damage their own property, - leads German men to stand armed shoulder to shoulder."

The scenes of 26. May were repeated in the following days. The highpoint of this stage was reached in the open racism displayed on Thursday, 28. May after a Fathers' Day party. 400 normal citizens laid siege to the former barracks like a pogrom out for lynch justice. Other than the slogans already quoted, the dominating mood of this evening can best be summed up by the quote "You lot'll burn tonight". The fact that it "only" went as far as bottle throwing was probably due only to the intervention of a strong police force being quickly mobilized (also from other states). As, a Christian Democrat councillor who dashed to the scene commented: "They want to see a sacrificial offering." (MM 30 May 92)

This highpoint also saw the simultaneous unfolding of an orchestrated campaign to play things down by the city officials and their pen pushers, making excuses for and instrumentalizing the racist mob. The MM spoke of "drunken youths" in their report of 30.5, accompanied by a large audience of "on-lookers".

The Mayor of Mannheim Widder is particularly worthy of mention in this context. Widder, together with the Mayor of Munich Kronawitter and the North Rhine Westphalian politician Fahrtrmann ("Grab 'em by the collar and chuck 'em out") make up the spearhead of anti-foreigner bourgeois SPD politicians, who for example have long argued for an amendment to the constitution regarding the right to asylum. In Autumn 1991, the Mannheim city council with its SPD majority demanded an amendment to the pertinent Article 16.

On the evening of 28. May, Widder joined the racist mob "to listen to the complaints of the Schoenauerians about the asylum seekers" (MM, 30.5.) and to reassure them. He did not go on this evening into the camp to the threatened asylum seekers... On 29. May the Mayor distributed an open letter to Schoenau, in which he addressed the "disturbed (our emphasis-vo) citizens in front of the State Camp for Asylum Seekers". In this letter he sincerely begged his "dear fellow citizens, both in their own interests, and in the interests of the city as a whole to act calmly." Refugees apparently have no interests. In general, the Mayor emphasized that he can understand the German mob only too well. Not a word condemned the events of the preceding days. Moreover, he pointed out that he had asked for talks with the state to work for an "easing of the situation in Schoenau." To this aim, a package of immediate measures had been agreed: "Provocations" and "noisy disturbances" by the refugees would be halted, the gate guards would be reinforced. "Camp occupants, who do not abide by the regulations, will be immediately expelled from the camp." He assured the male German mob, that no more single men would be allowed into the camp.

In this way, culprits became victims and the victims culprits, just as always in a racist German ideology. The letter could be summed up something like this: You are right, but keep calm, then the state will be better able to

represent your interests.

Indeed, one asks oneself, what is the difference between the Asylum policies practiced and planned by the state and those of the mob on the streets. If Widder were not Mayor, then he could at least throw a bottle. Naturally, it does still make a difference to the refugees, whether they are subjected to the regulated state policies of segregation and expulsion or the directly life-threatening activities of racist-motivated "normal" citizens or Faschos. This difference should not be overlooked and is very real for the refugees, even if many of those expelled also face life-threatening situations (for example if Kurds are expelled to Turkey or Iraq). My argument is, that on an ideological level, there are real common features between the state segregation- and regulated entry policies (to acquire the labor force needed by German industry) on the one hand and the racist German mob on the other. In a nutshell, this ideological common ground is to be found in the slogan "Germany for the Germans." The (for now only shouted) "We don't want any foreign pigs" expresses if you turn it around and constitutes - so as to speak - the German people's state from below, in the same way as the right to citizenship is defined according to national origin (A German is, who has German blood). Widder expresses this common ground in excusing the culprits and his understanding for the "worries" of the "dear fellow citizens of Schoenau" (He meant naturally the Germans.). More precisely: Really the riotous racists are not culprits at all in his eyes, rather he sees them as victims. The situation of the refugees, who really are under threat, he does not regard as being a point of concern at all.

On the other hand, he is more than prepared to take really brutal action against some persons with a German passport. That is those Germans, who name the German mob for what it is and who declare their solidarity with the refugees.

Against "Chaotic left wing commandos" and "Troublemakers"

It would also appear to be in the state's interest, aside from the common ideology with - and all understanding for the German citizens' mob, to ensure that the everyday reality of racism in Germany gets as little publicity as possible. This was already the trend since Hoyerswerda and was to be observed in the tendency for reports about racist attacks to disappear from published media. This, even though anyone can see that in reality the opposite is the case as is shown by the crime statistics each state publishes. This meant that the police had to "clear the area" in front of the barracks, even if this was done in a relatively tame way accompanied by pleas for understanding: At the beginning of any night you could see the pigs chatting in a relaxed way with the citizens' mob.

The police actions against the left solidarity with the refugees were incomparably harder. From 2. June onwards, mainly Frankfurt anti-racists organized vigils in front of the refugee camp. These anti-racists were attacked verbally and physically by the Schoenau locals right from

the first night. When they defended themselves, the police intervened and arrested those people demonstrating solidarity. This was repeated on the following nights. Widder, the city administration, the pigs and the media constructed new culprits - "chaotic, left-wing commandos", trouble-makers" and "polit-rockers". The entire local population of Schoenau were declared victims, who had to ward off the violence of the renegades from elsewhere. The demo planned for 6. June was attacked on these lines. This criminalization of anti-racist protests could be followed in the reporting of the MM from 3. June onwards. At the same time the pogrom atmosphere in Schoenau did not exist any more even as "drunken youths".

Several things can be seen as proof, that the ensuing two weeks of slanderous attacks and violent repression by the state and its' propagandists were not the result of the brutal, image-seeking and power-craziness of a few local barons (This description certainly fits Mayor Widder, but who in his position does it not fit?). Moreover, much would indicate cold-blooded political planning. If Mannheim-Schoenau has to become "public knowledge" - which certainly would always be the aim of any demo - then the public were to be served up a different version than the real "scandal" of the racist citizens' mob. Other than from the reporting of the MM described above, this can also be seen from the criminalization strategy practiced by the city administration and police in connection with the first demo planned in Schoenau for 6. June. This demo was planned to show solidarity with the refugees and protest against the racist siege.

Even as late as Wednesday, 3. June, an official of the responsible city office told us that the demo would probably be authorized (We are old acquaintances), even if not in the Lilienthal Road directly in front of the camp. On Thursday, however, we were told that now nothing was certain, because Mayor Widder had made the whole thing a matter for the "boss" to decide. In other words, if not before, then from that time on, the matter was discussed politically at the highest level. In the course of 5. June, we were given to understand, that a demo in Schoenau would be prohibited. The actual prohibition order came at about 15:00 hours, that is at a time when even had all participants wanted to, a national mobilization could not have been reversed. A protest against the prohibition order was defeated in the first court of appeal on Friday evening.

An attempt to conduct a "de-escalation" talk with the police leadership was brusquely turned down on Friday evening. The police leadership were firmly behind the Mayor of Mannheim in this. In order to avoid a disaster in Schoenau, we discussed conducting a spontaneous demo in the city center on Parade Square, should the prohibition order be upheld by the second court of appeal. We could not really be aware at this point, that a police beating party was already planned, regardless of where we held a demo.

In the course of Saturday, however, this did fact become more than clear. Several attempts to again make contact with the police leaders failed during the morning. The first talk in the "Leaders' Bunker" (so termed by the

police) at about 16:00 resulted in absolutely nothing, except the statement that all demos were prohibited for the entire city of Mannheim and that this prohibition would be enforced. At this point we were already trying to re-route the people at the road-blocks to the city center. Typical for what was planned, and for what the police had obviously been prepared for long in advance was the remark of a police officer at one road block: "Yeah, drive on down to the Parade Square, we'll put you on parade all right." In the "Leaders' bunker" a statement was given out that they regretted the re-routing of the demo to the city center, because they would have had the situation "better under control" if the demo had gone ahead in the

The scenario described above repeated itself similarly over the next few weeks, as far as the events on the Schoenau were concerned and also the demo planned for there on 13. June. A particularly revolting example for the openly repressive atmosphere still deserves especial mention. In the best German tradition, the back room boys at the MM could not resist printing line for line, the complete list of names and addresses of all those who had sought permission for the 13. June demo to take place. A demo that had in the meantime been again banned. This was really nothing less than a call for lynch justice.

On 13. June itself a state of emergency was in force in Mannheim. Police



(relatively remote) Schoenau. What was meant by that was made clear by the police chief Grenztrupp five minutes before the police held their beating party. The Mayor of Mannheim's lackey answered verbatim to a pertinent question that he wanted "a military solution". In the ensuing police attack, that started without any further ado and that was carried out with drawn truncheons, but no riot shields (as was characteristic for the entire affair), the first people to be beaten up were those who had already withdrawn from the Parade Square. I have seldom seen anything to compare with the brutality that came next. People were chased into doorways and beaten up for minutes on end, the pigs hammered down on people who were falling over each other trying to get out, doctors rushing to provide help were shoved away... For three hours a faceless beating machine was in operation. On this day there were over 140 arrests, more than twenty were injured, some seriously.

It is however, more important for me after describing these events to stress the political planning involved, that showed again in the media reports after the demo. These talked of "rioting in the Mannheim city center"; the police were also criticized now and again. The racism in Schoenau was either left out completely or mentioned as an afterthought. As a point of self-criticism, we have to admit that we also failed to bring our message about the racism in Schoenau over publicly.

barricades had been erected on all entry roads, meat wagons were set up at appropriate tram stops, at the barricades, on the streets and all around the railway station, which was surrounded by police. A left-wing pub was also stormed by police. 300 people were held in Karlsruhe in a convoy that was coming to the demo. Many comrades were stopped on the motorways and forced under threat of arrest to turn back.

In view of this situation, it is certainly a success that we were able to hold a small demo of approximately 300 people in a neighboring suburb to Schoenau and around 2500 of us demonstrated in the city center. The support and welcome given to the larger demo especially in the part of town lived in by mainly foreign people was also good.

Nevertheless, we must not overlook the awful situation that anti-racists are in, of which Mannheim is currently exemplary. The position is to be between: a spreading racist social consensus (see here for example, the question of asylum), a sometimes active, but unorganized racist citizens' mob (see Schoenau or Hoyerswerda), state repression (the police could have come down even harder also on 13. June), and organized, active fascists (who - luckily - have not made any relevant intervention in Mannheim as yet, this time). In all of this, we have yet to find a way how we can work politically with the refugees.

Probably, no one has the answer as to how to deal with this situation and there is much to discuss on this point. That has become clearer in Mannheim, than it was in the, what was for us more theoretical, debate about Hoyerswerda. And that leads us to the discussion, that the developments sparked off in Schoenau amongst the left.

Left reactions

"We want to show the men and women in the refugee camp our solidarity (...) Our political goal is also to disperse this German mob and to drive them off the streets. Admittedly, this involves only intimidation, we are not going to change the racist thought patterns of the population by this (...) It must be made clear that racism can not be practiced without personal risks." This is how Frankfurt anti-racists formulated the task in hand in a leaflet entitled: "A call to drive the German Mob from the streets of Schoenau." This leaflet was also intended to mobilize for the 6. June demo.

Amongst other things, these sentences were cause for argument amongst the Mannheim left, in which it appeared to be about mainly form things - location of the demo, timing, nationwide or local mobilization? However, questions about content and arguments about the matter itself developed from these form things. I want to try to portray these arguments here, because it is a discussion that will probably have to be had elsewhere in connection with anti-racist politics.

One can see such sentences as those quoted above as being "hot air" for several reasons. Firstly, we were certainly not in a position with our relatively weak forces to drive off the racist mob from in front of the camp every night, especially bearing in mind that Schoenau may well not remain an exceptional case for the future. Secondly, it is n't everybody's thing, who we hoped to win politically for this goal. In this respect, the wording might work here rather off-putting. The Frankfurtians are also to be criticized for just announcing this leaflet along with a demo planned for 6. June at a meeting in Mannheim without leaving any possibility for a joint resolution being passed after discussion. This meant that the whole thing seemed very elitist and imposed from above. This made discussions about content more difficult, which would have had to have led to a joint concept for action, even taking the pressures of time into account.

That the demo on 6. June was only supported by very few Mannheim forces, that is not to say individuals, also had something to do with this behavior. Equally though, there was a disagreement about content. This became clear for example over the question of whether, one is allowed to call the mob a mob. That, so was argued, was in the end politically non-viable, because one had to take into account that many Schoenauerians too were affected by social misery, cuts... and political work also had to start here. This meant that any criticism should be directed first and foremost against the unsocial policies of the state. A demo should not be directed against

the Schoenauerians - no one had demanded this in such a totality - and should therefore not take place in Schoenau, but in front of the political addressees (city center, city hall). Other than the rejection of the demo location, the timing of the demo was also criticized. 6. June was too soon, simply because what was called for in advance of any demo was to mobilize with book stalls, public meetings, etc along the lines of the "real" problems also in Schoenau. In general, more time was needed to mobilize successfully.

This last argument came however, from the very people, who during the Gulf War were able to mobilize (large) demos within a matter of days or even on occasion half a day. So the argument is about something else. I want to bend the stick some here: Whereas the Gulf War was about an imagined threat of the German front garden, the racist siege however, was launched from the German front garden. Behind these - admittedly abbreviated - polemics, lies a difficulty inherent to all anti-racist and anti-fascist politics. The typical 'Them' and 'Us' pattern ('Us' being always the 'people' in their entirety) simply does not fit here. The Left has to face much more complex and complicated social relations, particularly in a country with a past like Germany has. Of course, there is much still to be worked on in this area and much to discuss.

However, I am concerned here with the perspectives, under which this discussion has to be held. It is simply a question too of the angle that you take and how you see it. In this respect, it is much more important to me to mobilize politically against the dumb mob in front of the camp, than any cuts. Anything else leads only to a mixing up of culprits and victims, and excusing the culprits, whereby racist structures appear only as a side issue.

Another leaflet demonstrated very well what kind of warped optics can be used in approaching this issue, which moreover was written in this case by people who supported a demo in Schoenau. The layout included the grand headline "Rebellion is justified, but not like this!" And then: "The stupidity and cowardice of some Schoenauerians attempts to turn their anger about the way things are against those who are weaker is despicable." Still it is "despicable". However, what is the point here of referring to the "anger about the way things are"? As if the culprits really wanted to express that and not their racist values. As always, the culprits here appear as corrupted victims, who have to be brought back on to the straight and narrow. "There is a wide choice of enemies: real estate agents, bosses, politicians, banks, police, etc." That may be, however what are we to do, if the people have got it firmly into their heads, that they want to live out their rebellion on racist lines? Practice political social work with active racists?? Dear sisters and brothers! "Not like this!" Discussion is not only justified, but also necessary!

Political social work is something one could leave up to the DKP, being as their sole representative on the city council, Walter Ebert, happens to have been elected for Schoenau. Unfortunately, this party makes your hair stand on end. For a whole week, the party did not say anything at all. Well not quite. Ebert did

give out a press release, nothing to do with the Schoenau events, just on the problems of rising rents in general. Then, they did bring out a special edition of their local paper "blickpunkt" (viewpoint). "City, state and the federal government must find at last a solution to the social problems of Schoenau! No state of siege and no prejudices against the Schoenauerians." This is how the party paper addressed the "dear fellow citizens of Schoenau" (We have heard this somewhere before.). "Insults and threats against foreign citizens" was condemned, however, oh dear, the real culprits are to be found elsewhere: 1. "We reject the blanket insults of our area as being racist and attempts by outsiders, to teach our (!) citizens lessons, maybe even using violence." 2. "Politicians and company bosses want to use scapegoats".

Are we really supposed to discuss this? A friendly suggestion: Try joining Mayor Widder. That is better for both our nerves and yours. It would also gather the forces for you somehow much more to your liking, from the point of view of political alliances.

And in Schönau?

The situation has been defused about as much as the racist siege of the refugee camp started unexpectedly. The mob has withdrawn behind the police barricades, albeit not so large as before. However, now we see "normal" citizens hanging around the camp armed with clubs. From another corner of the camp, cars drive by with occupants shouting racist slogans swearing revenge: "We will get you", is one slogan. If just two of you go out for a walk in Schoenau, the chances are that you will get beaten up, which has happened to us. Moreover, the camp can obviously only be protected from attack by a massive police presence. Probably, you will hear more from Mannheim. And if not from here, then from elsewhere. It is real bad, to have to write it like this. However, we must face up to this in our actions, our discussions and our politics. Unfortunately.

vo., Mannheim



Die Moorsoldaten

Em D7

Wo - hin auch das Au - ge blicket Moor und

Em D7 Em D7

Heide nur ringe - um. Vo - gel - sang uns

G D7 Em D7

nicht er - quicket Eichen stehen kahl und

Em D7 G D

krumm Wir sind die Moor - sol - da - ten und ziehen

D7 Em D7 Em

mit dem Spaten - ten ins Moor Wir Moor

Hier in dieser öden Heide
ist das Lager aufgebaut,
wo wir fern von jeder Freude
hinter Stacheldraht verstaubt.
Wir sind die Moorsoldaten ...

Morgens ziehen die Kolonnen
in das Moor zur Arbeit hin.
Graben bei dem Brand der Sonne,
doch zur Heimat steht der Sinn.
Wir sind die Moorsoldaten ...

Heimwärts, heimwärts jeder sehnet
zu den Eltern, Weib und Kind.
Manche Brust ein Seufzer dehnet,
weil wir hier gefangen sind.
Wir sind die Moorsoldaten ...

Auf und nieder gehn die Posten,
keiner, keiner kann hindurch.
Flucht wird nur das Leben kosten,
vierfach ist umzäunt die Burg.
Wir sind die Moorsoldaten ...

Doch für uns gibt es kein Klagen,
ewig kann's nicht Winter sein.
Einmal werden froh wir sagen :
Heimat, du bist wieder mein.
Dann ziehn die Moorsoldaten
nicht mehr mit dem Spaten
ins Moor !



Musik : Rudi Goguel
bearbeitet von
Hanns Eisler

**Text : Johann Esser und
Wolfgang Langhoff**

This song was invented in the Concentrationcamp Börgermoor 2 near Papenburg in the north of Germany. It was brought to the Czechoslovakia, where german Antifascists picked it up immediately. This song became a symbol for antifascist resistance in Germany all over the world. It was composed in 1933 for a cultural meeting of the prisoners called "Zirkus Konzentrani". It was supposed to show the ideological and moral power of the comrades which gave them power against the SS. Prisoners who were moved into other camps, spread the song, in a short time it became a well known song in Concentrationcamps. Ernst Busch sung the song of the "Moorsoldaten" during the spanish civil war inside the International Brigades.

This article is a report on gay and lesbian life in Cuba. We think it is important to publish this, for a number of reasons. In the first place, we think Cuba and its people deserve our solidarity, especially in their current difficult situation. We also think that this should be a critical solidarity, and that criticisms should openly and frankly be said.

There have already for a long time been criticisms on Cuba's policy towards gays and lesbians. A lot of this is correct. The point is, however, that these criticisms are also often used (by white heterosexuals!!!!!!) to block off solidarity.

What we find good about this article is that the author has went directly there, and spoke to people. This opens up the way for mutual discussions, and includes the possibility to change the attitudes of the Cuban leadership you criticize, without disrespecting the Cuban people and ignoring the many changes for the good the revolution has accomplished.

This has also been done by European comrades a few years ago, which proved to be very productive. After several harsh discussions, a group of people decided to go to Cuba with a Queer Brigade, to discuss and to help in a building project. This led to new insights, for both groups involved. The Cuban people they talked with learned a lot about their macho and church-dominated views on homosexuality, and the Europeans also learned a lot. Like that, up to the revolution, Cuba was one large brothel for rich white US homosexuals and male homosexuality is still associated very much with colonialism, poverty and prostitution.

We think that critical solidarity, as shown in these examples, is absolutely necessary and that your own position in that should be very carefully analysed.

'A lot of changes are happening'

By Sharon Ayling

[Sonja DeVries is a lesbian political activist who recently returned from Cuba, where she spent six months with Vikki Dow conducting research for a book on lesbian and gay life there. The following are excerpts of an interview with her by Workers World reporter Saul Kanowitz in San Francisco June 29.]

When we asked for visas from the Cuba Interest Section in Washington, D.C., we said it was to research lesbian and gay life in Cuba. They said great, it was an important thing to do, and they wanted to help.

When we got to Cuba, someone from the Central Committee of the Communist Party put us in contact with people from the many mass organizations. They were all willing to discuss the gay issue with us and to help us out. They were also really willing to acknowledge that prejudices still exist and that there had been some hard things that had happened in the past.

I felt we were working in a really supportive atmosphere. We went wherever we wanted to go, talked to whomever we wanted to talk to, from counter-revolutionary to pro-revolutionary—a really wide range of official and non-official people. We had access to legal records and all kinds of things.

A lot of changes are happening in Cuba. For example, the national sex education program does education about homosexuality in a positive way. It's a government-funded program that educates doctors, mental health workers and teachers. They recently started putting this into the national teacher training program to make teachers more supportive when gay students need to talk with them. They are also talking with therapists to get families to do therapy around supporting and accepting their kids or other family members if they are gay.

Both gay men and lesbian women are more visible than when I visited two years ago. There are tea houses where younger lesbians and gay men hang out. The atmosphere is very open. Everybody knows that's where the gay people hang out. They are basically left alone. I didn't hear of any cases of gay bashing while I was there.

The Communist Youth have this mobile disco and one weekend they brought it to the gay beach. Some straight man started harassing this gay man who was in drag. The gay man went to the police and told them—and the police arrested the straight guy. There is a play about a friendship between a gay man and a young communist straight man, which ran for four months. It's all about the prejudices that this young communist has against this gay man and how through discussion they become friends. It was reviewed in the paper and the radio, which said it was a really important play because it dealt with people's prejudice.

Then there was an art show sponsored by the AIDS information bureau that we saw in April. It was basically this very homoerotic art about people with AIDS in this public gallery. I walked in there and was completely blown away, with all the stuff here around the National Endowment for the Arts and the censorship of homoerotic art.

On terms of where homophobia stems from, the general sentiment is that homophobia has existed for centuries, that it was part of the Spanish colonial heritage and the Catholic Church—things that have influenced many aspects of Cuban society. The gay people I interviewed were really clear that while the leadership and people in the government have been influenced by the homophobic culture, it's not that the revolution itself is homophobic—or that socialism is inherently homophobic.

There is no law against homosexual acts, no "sodomy" laws. The first revised penal code after the revolution did away with the "sodomy" law but made it illegal to "publicly demonstrate your homosexual condition." In 1987, the penal code was revised and that law was thrown out. There is still a law against aggressively pursuing a homosexual relationship with someone who doesn't want one. Hopefully, this law will be thrown out soon, too. Hopefully, that law will be thrown out too.

There is no law against gay people being in the Communist Party. It is more a matter of prejudice, which is really changing. Someone who is gay was just elected to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba.

While we were there, the Union of Young Communists had a congress and during a discussion on AIDS, a psychiatrist said that effeminate boys

should be counseled to change so that they didn't have family problems. Vilma Espin, who's the head of the Federation of Cuban Women and a member of the Council of State, interrupted and challenged him. She said this is completely the wrong approach. We don't need to work on changing people who are homosexual but accept them and work on our own prejudices. We need to make lesbian and gay youth feel accepted within our ranks.

For someone who is so public and so identified with the revolution to be saying that is very exciting. It shows that's the direction they are going.

People feel really strongly that gay people shouldn't be discriminated against. What's most important is that this is in the context of a society that is basically very humane.

To me, gay liberation is about a lot more than gay rights. Gay rights are important. We all benefit from them. But they don't give us housing or health care or education or any of those things that are basic human rights. Cuba does recognize those rights. If a person is sick in Cuba, you don't have to worry if you can afford treatment or not.

To me things like these are really important, like the fact that the Cuban government is fighting racism and sexism on a concrete basis.

I feel we need to connect all those things. Gay liberation is about fighting racism, classism, all these things. That is the reason that I have always supported Cuba as a lesbian and just as a human being.





*What happens to a
dream deferred?*

*Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun
Or fester like a sore —
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten
meat?
Or crust and sugar over —*

*Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.*

Or does it explode?

— Langston Hughes

LA: The Fire This Time

Mike Davis

CovertAction: What happened in Los Angeles? Was it a riot, an uprising, a rebellion, an insurrection, and why would you term it one or the other?

Mike Davis: I think the majority of the participants, particularly the youths who started it, see the events that began on April 29th as a rebellion. When I was at a meeting of the Crips and Bloods in Inglewood in mid-May, it was referred to as a slave rebellion. Although the term “riot” doesn’t have negative connotations for me as a labor historian, I think the wishes of the people who were the motive force should be honored.

In any case, you can’t reduce the events to a single essence—one major characteristic or identity. LA was a hybrid social revolt with three major dimensions. It was a revolutionary democratic protest characteristic of African-American history when demands for equal rights have been thwarted by the major institutions. It was also a major post-modern bread riot—an uprising of not just poor people but particularly of those strata of poor in southern

California who’ve been most savagely affected by the recession. Thirdly, it was an inter-ethnic conflict—particularly the systematic destroying and uprooting of Korean stores in the Black community.

So it was all of those things at once and issues of rage, class, and race cannot be separated out. Sometimes they coalesced, sometimes they were parallel in time and space.

CAIB: Is it ironic that a revolt against racism manifested itself in one of its aspects as interracial violence?

MD: No, it has, of course, happened before in the riots of the ’60s. When Martin Luther King came to LA in August 1965, right at the end of the first Watts rebellion, he was initially confused about the causes. But after talking to people on the street and having some pretty straightforward confrontations, he decided that it was a class rebellion: “a rebellion of the underprivileged against the privileged.” Those were exactly his words. And he acknowledged that the two targets of it were first of all the police and White institutions and secondly, White-owned stores. So in August 1965, by and large, White people themselves were scarcely attacked.

In those days the grievances that really fueled the attack on the White-owned stores were a little different than now.

Mike Davis is a labor historian and author of *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (New York: Vintage, 1991). The interview took place in late May 1992. Photo: Ted Soqui/Impact Visuals, Los Angeles uprising.

For instance, many of the White-owned stores then were owned by Jewish-Americans — some of whom had good relations with the community.

The real target of peoples' wrath in the '60s was the credit stores, the kind of place where you'd buy a bed on time and end up paying the price of a new car. Because they lacked access to major retail centers, ghetto residents were forced into a form of debt peonage.

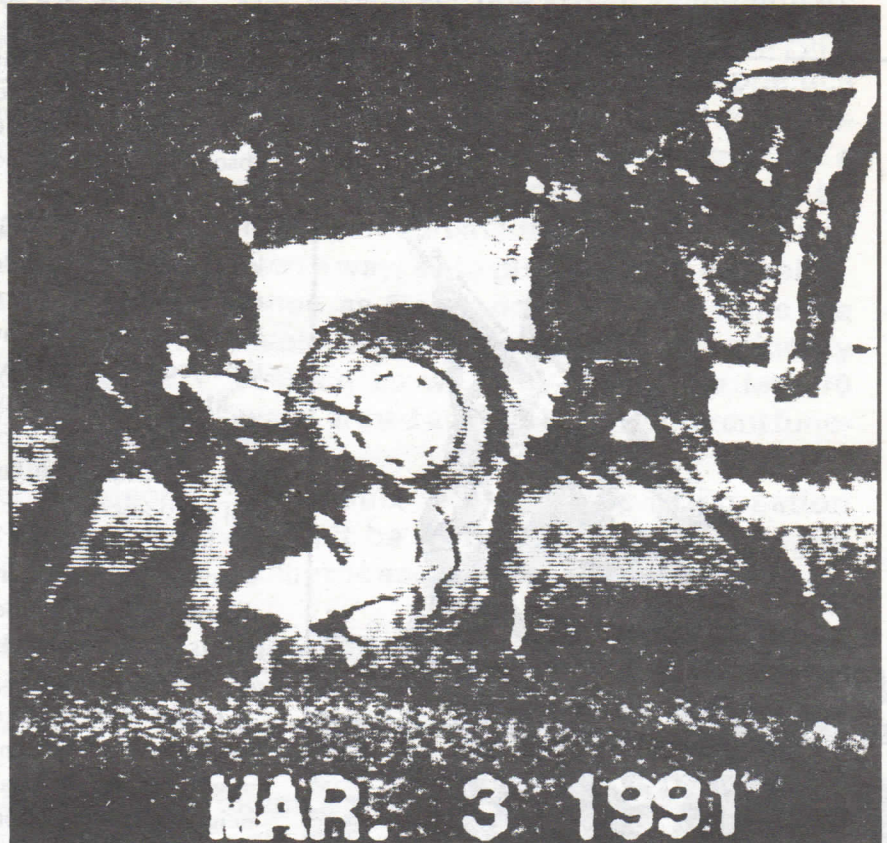
This time the contradictions are different. The issue centers not just on high prices (although you'll hear that), but above all on abusive treatment of Black customers. Of course, the grievance which I think lay heavier than Rodney King's beating on the hearts of many Black youths was the murder of Latasha Harlins by a Korean shopkeeper in L.A. I say murder because I can see no other word for the act of shooting her in the back of the head.

CAIB: In addition to the differences in targets, what other differences and similarities are there between '65 and '92? What about the racial composition, the issues, and the numbers of people involved?

MD: What the district attorney's office, and probably the city attorney as well, have been doing is trying to paint this as the action of a criminal fringe. They are both law-and-order Democrats who have their eyes on the attorney

This is the biggest domestic repression since the Nixon era. Federalized within 48 hours of the first explosion of anger, it represents a new model of urban counterinsurgency.

general's office in Sacramento. But they, along with all the Republican candidates in this state, as well as other born again law-and-order Democrats like Mel Levine, are echoing the 1965 McCone Commission on Watts in claiming that there are no valid reasons for taking to the streets.



Ted Soqui/Impact Visuals, from George Holliday video
From the video of the LAPD beating of motorist Rodney King.

Yet, after the McCone Commission came out, UCLA researchers spent a long time doing detailed surveys in the community, and what they discovered is that far from it being the action of a criminal fringe, the 1965 rebellion was extremely popular. At least 22,000 people, they found, took an active part in looting, burning, fighting the police. Another 50,000 to 60,000 people were passive bystanders in the streets cheering them on. So you had maybe 75,000 people involved. I would say that at least twice that number took part in the recent rebellion — probably with the same ratio of active participants to passive supporters.

Of the first 5,000 people arrested, 52 percent were Latino and only 39 percent Black. So it's clear, at least to the extent of the looting and some of the arson, that this was as much a Latino as a Black rebellion. And in order to understand that, you have to comprehend the severity of the current economic crisis in Los Angeles. It is an obvious linkage that the media have almost never made. Although they talk about gaps between haves and have-nots, what actually fueled this outbreak is not a general structural trend, but a specific economic condition: we are in the worst recession southern California has seen since the '30s. And the only account of it that you tend to get in the papers concerns unemployed aerospace engineers.



Ted Soqui/Impact Visuals

National Guard in action on LA streets after King verdict.

It's been a vicious, disastrous recession for the newest strata of immigrants from Mexico and Central America, which is why the worst looting outside the Black areas occurred in the largely Mexican eastern half of South Central LA, and in Central American immigrant areas like Hollywood and the MacArthur Park area.

Of course, another thing that's different from '65 is that geographically, the affected region is at least twice the area of the 1965 riot and curfew area, even extending tentacles into White middle-class areas. Undoubtedly, although you did have some opportunistic looting—yuppies in BMWs and a whole variety of people—the main force driving it was a need for consumer goods and necessities. A lot of

people couldn't buy things like milk, diapers or bread for three or four days. There was a huge power shortage and everybody's food spoiled. People who didn't want to were absolutely forced to loot.

CAIB: Many Central Americans who've lived with war know that when there's a chance to get food in a situation that chaotic, you need to grab it, because there's no telling how long the breakdown will continue, and in the meantime you and your family could starve.

MD: Absolutely. I observed the looting in several areas very carefully, and I spent hours among the looters. There was tremendous enthusiasm for athletic shoes, obviously, but particularly in the MacArthur Park area, people went for basic necessities. I saw people who looted and then watched them take a carload of food and diapers and distribute it among their neighbors in the tenement apartments of the Central American area west of downtown LA.

CAIB: What have been the repercussions of the uprising for Central Americans? Have there been large INS [Immigration and Naturalization Service] incursions into the neighborhoods, deportations, or any other evidence that the INS has taken advantage of the situation?

MD: Definitely. What's happened is absolutely terrifying. First of all, from a very early point, the repression itself was federalized and federally driven.

Mike Hernandez, the progressive Chicano councilperson representing MacArthur Park, asked very early on for police protection for Latino store owners. The response: his area was the last to get any kind of police protection. Instead, by Friday (the rebellion started on Wednesday) 1,000 INS and Border Patrol (the latter drafted from as far away as Texas) poured into the area and set up command posts at 3rd and Vermont and MacArthur Park. They've already deported nearly 700 people.

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In my *Nation* piece [June 1, 1992, pp. 734-46], I mistakenly said that these people were accused of looting, but it now turns out that large numbers of the deportees were never charged at all. (Those against whom charges were lodged are still in custody at the INS detention center on Terminal Island and County Jail.) The roundup has broken

up families and sent terror through the Central American community. Many of those arrested were simply day laborers standing on the same corners they always stand on, people just caught on the street, even a 14-year-old mentally retarded girl who was deported to Mexico. In direct violation of Los Angeles city policy, the LAPD assisted the INS and the Border Patrol. INS agents were being taken around by the LAPD in police cars, supposedly as translators.

Very clearly, the INS and Border Patrol have used the uprising to vacuum up people in the community. More than just taking the opportunity to deport large numbers of people, they have used the situation to instill fear. It's been a reign of terror followed by political attacks not only on the Black community, but to a surprising degree on Central Americans.

If it's true that the Bush administration is divided between "softs" and "hards" on urban issues, the "hards" are really hitting on the immigration question. In LA, a number of right-wing Republicans campaigning for office have singled out the immigrants. Very early on, the Justice Department claimed that a third of those arrested were illegal immigrants. Although the figure is simply not true, it was bandied around by every right-wing political figure. Even some of the supposedly liberal Chicano leaders tried to distance themselves from the Latino looting. Despite the fact that thousands and thousands of Mexican immigrants participated, some of these leaders blamed it on Salvadorans who are "refugees" and not "real immigrants" like Mexicans.

But now, as a direct result of the backlash, the struggle of the Guatemalans (the second largest Central American



Police brutality cases have been endemic in Los Angeles for decades. In 1982, after he accidentally hit a police car, three deputies beat this man in front of his wife, children and grandparents; his head required 53 stitches.

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group in the community) to gain temporary protected status [TPS] is totally defeated. The Salvadorans, the largest group, have been given an informal one-year extension of their temporary protected status by the Bush administration. Bush sent a letter to Salvadoran President Cristiani saying: Congratulations, they can stay here for

another year and then we'll see what happens. Because the agreement is not legally binding, the 75,000 Salvadorans in the neighborhood across the street from me are now totally hostage to how the backlash develops.

Because they sense that they've become the most vulnerable scapegoats, the Central American community is rushing to register voters, to encourage people to become active in local politics and to make alliances. That is the silver lining in this huge shock to the Central American community.

CAIB: That leads us to ask who benefits and who loses in an uprising like LA? In '65, the Black Panther Party was formed in the wake of Watts, but it in turn was crushed by the massive government repression of COINTELPRO and other operations. Do you see patterns like that emerging?

MD: Of course. In a period when the majority of the Democratic Party is no longer available as a reformist instrument and New Deal liberalism is virtually dead, non-violent social disorder is about the only way that you can put the survival issues of the community on the agenda to address the continuing daily economic and literal violence.

This rebellion is going to produce very mixed results: On the good side, it has further politicized the gangs. Political consciousness always existed in the sense that members, many of whom were sympathetic to Black

OPEN SEASON ON LAPD
 TE ALL CRIPS AND BLOODS
 LETS UNITE AND DONT GANGBANG AND LET IT
 BE A BLACK THING FOR THE LITTLE BLACK
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 P3"NSG"

AND THE REST
 OF THE LOCS AND BEE DOGS

1. BLACK POWER

05-08-92

5-12-92

TO: STATION PATROL UNITS

FROM: FIRESTONE O.S.S.

SUBJECT: OFFICER SAFETY INFORMATION

DURING THE PAST WEEK, MEMBERS OF THE FPK OSS TEAM HAVE RECEIVED INFORMATION FROM 3 SEPARATE RELIABLE INFORMANT GANG BANGERS ON THREE SEPARATE OCCASIONS. ALL THREE ARE FROM DIFFERENT GANGS (2 CRIPS AND 1 BLOOD). ALL THREE RELATE BASICALLY THE SAME INFORMATION.

THEY SAY THAT THE CRIPS AND BLOODS FROM THE HOUSING PROJECTS HAVE UNITED UNDER THE DIRECTION AND LEADERSHIP OF MUSLIMS. THERE HAVE BEEN THREE SEPARATE MEETINGS WHERE BOTH GANGS WERE IN ATTENDANCE: 8/8/92 IN THE JORDAN DOWNS, 8/6/92 IN THE IMPERIAL COURTS AND ON 5/7/92 IN THE NICKERSON GARDENS.

THIS INFO WAS CONFIRMED BY S.P.T. DEPUTIES WHO SURVEILLED ALL THREE MEETINGS. THEY SAW BLOODS AND CRIPS DRESSED IN THEIR GANG'S COLORS HANGING OUT TOGETHER. THEY NUMBERED ANYWHERE FROM 300-500. ADDITIONALLY, ON 8/8/92, AN FPK OSS UNIT STOPPED A CAR FILLED WITH 3 GRAPE STREET CRIPS DRESSED DOWN IN THEIR PURPLE GANG COLORS DRIVING OUT OF THE NICKERSON GARDENS WHICH IS A BLOOD NEIGHBORHOOD. THE GANG MEMBERS TOLD THE OSS DEPUTIES THAT THEY (CRIPS) CAN GO INTO ANY HOUSING PROJECT NOW AS THEY HAVE CALLED A TRUCE. THEY SAID THAT THEY DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT OTHER GANGS BUT ALL OF THE HOUSING PROJECT GANGS HAVE UNITED.

THE INFORMANTS STATED THAT THE PURPOSE OF THESE MEETINGS HAS BEEN TO DEVELOP STRATEGY AND TACTICS FOR KILLING COPS. THEY SAID THAT THE MUSLIMS WANT TO TARGET COPS WHEN THEY ARE MOST VULNERABLE, WHICH IS WHEN THEY ARE LEAVING THE STATION HEADED HOME. THEY PLAN TO FOLLOW A COP FROM THE STATION AND DO THEM AWAY FROM THE STATION. THE GANG'S LEADERS HOWEVER, WANT TO DO RANDOM AND SPORADIC SHIPING OF COPS IN THE FIELD. THEN, WHEN HELP ARRIVES, THEY WILL SET UP AN AMBUSH FOR THEM. STILL, OTHER GANG MEMBERS WANT TO MAKE A BIGGER STATEMENT BY OVERTAKING AND BEATING A POLICE STATION. THEY SAY THAT THEY HAVE MORE GUNS AND MORE PEOPLE AT ANY GIVEN TIME THAN THE STATIONS HAVE INSIDE THE STATION DURING NORMAL BUSINESS HOURS.

THEY SAID THAT THE GANGS WANT TO WAIT FOR THE MILITARY TO PULL OUT AND FOR THE POLICE TO RETURN TO NORMAL OPERATIONS (IE: 1 CAR RESPONDING TO CALLS WITH ONLY 1 OR 2 COPS IN THE CAR) BEFORE THEY START THE "WAR". THEY SAID THAT THE MEETINGS SET FOR 8/12/92.

According to the LA Coalition Against Police Abuse, this document, circulated within the LAPD, was disinformation reminiscent of the FBI's COINTELPRO and was designed to undermine African-American organization and justify extreme police tactics.

nationalist ideology, understood the relentless logic of how destructive gang warfare was becoming. But until the rebellion, there was never an opportunity for the first person to take the step toward stopping the cycle.

The rebellion offered that possibility, and what we've seen since has just been astonishing. We're talking about meetings and gatherings of hundreds and hundreds of Crips and Bloods, five, six, seven hundred at a time. Recently, these have been violently broken up by the police. But, even if the truce breaks down, for most of them, being a gangbanger is no longer the thing to be. Now the thing to be is, in some sense, a liberation fighter.

Various internal groups have influenced this process of politicization. There are original veteran gang members who were politicized in prison and elsewhere and who represent a kind of post-Panther revolutionary Black politics. The Nation of Islam has also been very important (Louis Farrakhan is probably the only national figure most youths pay any attention to). It played a very constructive role in promoting gang peace. But they all know they're under attack, and they all know that provocations are being made.

CAIB: Have there been instances of infiltration of the gangs or of agents provocateurs fomenting trouble?

MD: One of the major establishment critiques of police conduct has been the failure of LAPD intelligence to foresee the magnitude of the rebellion or the coalescence of the gangs. Both Willie Williams, the new police chief, and

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ex-FBI, ex-CIA director William Webster, head of the commission investigating LAPD conduct during the rebellion, have emphasized beefing up police intelligence. In practical terms, this strategy is not so much a matter of a romanticized policy of deep cover infiltration of the gangs, as simply a ruthless escalation of police pressure on pathetic drug users who are friends or kin of gang members.

One of the most cost-effective tactics for mass-producing snitches is the so-called "reverse buy," where police act as drug dealers in order to entrap customers, who are then offered the choice of serving hard time or becoming informants. Indeed, the "reverse buy" is a cornerstone of the attorney general's "Weed and Seed" program now being implemented in 16 different metropolitan areas, including Los Angeles, Atlanta, Chicago, and Washington, D.C. It is also, of course, morally obnoxious and indicative of a full-blown police state.

In the meantime, the LAPD and the sheriffs are doing everything possible to disrupt the gang unity process. Under various pretexts, they have attacked every mass gathering, arresting scores of youths, usually for trivial offenses. The gangs, however, have refused to be suckered into violent confrontations with the police. They are acting smart, keeping their focus on unification and peacemaking. This response, of course, only further infuriates the police, who seem to fear gang unity above all else.

An incredible amount of obvious police disinformation — much of it reminiscent of COINTELPRO — is currently

We shall soon see police departments with the technology to put the equivalent of an electronic bracelet on entire social groups.

in circulation. The sheriffs, in particular, have leaked an "intelligence report" that claims, on the authority of anonymous informants, that the Crips and Bloods are planning an assault on a police station as well as ambushes of individual cops on their way home from work. Appended to the report is a crudely drawn leaflet proclaiming: "Eye for an Eye — Let's Kill Two Cops."



courtesy of Michael Zinzun

By spraying one gang's color over another's, members of the LAPD instigate friction and possible violence among rival gangs.

The sheriffs' document also categorically states that the Crips and Bloods are acting under "the direction and leadership of Muslims" (presumably Louis Farrakhan's Nation of Islam). This conclusion suggests that local, and perhaps federal, law enforcement agencies are exploring an all-embracing conspiracy scenario that links gangs, urban unrest, Farrakhan, and perhaps even certain Colombians and Iraqis.

CAIB: In LA, we saw the police and government use a high level of technology in intelligence gathering and repression techniques. What was the role of this increased sophistication, and what can we expect in the future?

MD: The mass arrests following the rebellion have depended upon the combined information processing capacities of the FBI and local law enforcement. In particular, the comprehensive databases on Black and Latino youth which the LAPD and sheriffs have been constructing over the past decade have been augmented by the FBI's expertise in analyzing video and photographic evidence.

It is now clear that one of the main functions of the 'anti-gang' dragnets such as the LAPD's Operation Hammer has been to create a rap sheet on virtually every young Black male in the city. Data are not simply being kept on people arrested, but rather people are being detained solely in order to generate new data.



Ted Soqui/Impact Visuals

Police Chief Daryl Gates, who will be retiring soon under pressure, has been challenged for his handling of charges of systematic police brutality and riots.

Thanks to massive street sweeps, the gang roster maintained by the LAPD and sheriffs has grown from 14,000 to 150,000 files over the last five years. This accumulation has allowed the District Attorney, Ira Reiner, to make the hyperbolic claim that 47 percent of all young Black males in LA County are active gang members. Needless to say, these files are not only employed in identifying suspects, but have also become a virtual blacklist. Under California's recent "Street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention Act" (STEP), for instance, membership in a gang, presumably as proven by inclusion in one of these databases, can become a separate felony charge.

The large-scale nocturnal operations mounted after midnight by the police and National Guard have been based on two sources: the "We Tip" public hot lines which have supposedly generated a thousand fruitful tips on looters and arsonists, and, of course, the police information banks on gang members. In the guise of searching for stolen property, the feds have been looking for the thousands of stolen guns. They haven't been very successful in that or in finding the 400 stolen police uniforms.

In my area, at the edge of the MacArthur Park Central American community, they were sweeping through the neighborhood, knocking on doors and walking right in. They have arrested people for sitting in their living rooms and not being able to produce a sales slip for their TV or couch.

In addition, the FBI has joined with the police in making unprecedented demands that the media and private individuals surrender every single negative and every inch of video tape taken during the rebellion.

The cops, of course, have tried to impress everyone with their speedy identification of the youths supposedly responsible for the beating of the White truck driver. But the real threat of these massive new databases and information technologies is not their role in a few sensationalized instances, but their application on a macro scale in the management of criminalized populations.

In Los Angeles I think we are beginning to see a repressive context that is literally comparable to Belfast or the West Bank, where policing has been transformed into full-scale counterinsurgency (or "low-intensity warfare," as the military likes to call it), against an entire social stratum or ethnic group. This means that virtually every member of the "terrorist" population is "managed" by the police in some fashion,

whether through literal imprisonment or through new restrictions on freedom of movement and association. The effect is as if a permanent state of martial law were imposed on specific neighborhoods or sections of the city.

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The implications reach further than LA—emerging technologies may be used to surveil and control entire quarters of urban areas. As someone involved in land-use issues, I've been going to meetings about Geographical Information Systems or GIS. Now geographers and urban planners, as well as traffic engineers and developers, are enthralled by the imminent prospect of basing the management of complex urban systems—traffic flows, zoning, and so on—on LANDSAT satellites linked to GIS software. Since the image resolution capabilities of commercial satellite systems are now approaching the threshold of distinguishing individual automobiles, and perhaps even people and their pets, it will be possible to monitor the movements of entire populations. As one GIS expert at UCLA pointed out to me, this will quickly revolutionize the policing of inner city areas.

CAIB: Not long ago, the National Security Agency conducted a secret test using one of its signals intelligence satellites to track one automobile traveling all the way across the country from the East to the West Coast, day and night, through storms and all kinds of conditions.

MD: That's phenomenal. Of course, satellite surveillance and GIS mapping will be augmented by the increasingly common use of automatic vehicle location systems like *Lojak*, or its more sophisticated cousin *Teletrac*. In Los Angeles, and I suspect in most large cities, especially those participating in the federal "Weed and Seed" program, the courts have been utterly promiscuous in allowing the police to clandestinely tag suspects' cars with these devices. It is not far-fetched to imagine a situation in a few years where everyone on probation, or entered in one of the criminal databases, will have to submit to some form of 24-hour electronic surveillance. We shall soon see police departments with the technology to put the equivalent of an electronic bracelet on entire social groups.

As Charles Murray and other reactionary ideologues have predicted, this will abet the trend toward certain neighborhoods becoming virtual outdoor prisons.

It's ironic, but you can have a kinder, gentler LAPD that includes more people of color, with fairly effective systems for dealing with the more egregious abuses, and at the same time have a rapidly rising level of repression.

CAIB: How have the local and federal levels worked together and what have been the roles of the FBI and the Justice Department?

MD: This is the biggest domestic repression since the Nixon era and it was federalized within 48 hours of the first explosion of anger. Although the feds were called in by Mayor Tom Bradley and Governor Pete Wilson, over the head of Chief Daryl Gates, President Bush was delighted to oblige for obvious electioneering reasons. Moreover, the White House and the Justice Department have taken the initiative in making Los Angeles the exemplar of their militarized New Urban Order. Some features of the repression in LA recall the worst "assembly-line justice" that accompanied the uprisings of the 1960s, but other aspects,

particularly the enlarged federal role, represent a new model of urban counterinsurgency.

Let me deal with the more familiar features first. This response of local law enforcement has been more draconian than in 1965, both in the magnitude of arrests and in the consistency of overcharging. LA-1992, in fact, more closely resembles the aftermath of the great Detroit uprising of 1969, when local authorities threw the book, and more, at alleged rioters. As in Detroit, the city attorney and D.A. in LA have suspended plea-bargaining and gone for the maximum possible indictments, bail amounts, and sentences.

Normally, most looters, for instance, would have been charged with petty theft or misdemeanor burglary. Since the riot, however, they have been indicted for felony burglary. They now face two or three year prison sentences rather than a simple fine. (The D.A. has indicated they won't accept anything less than one year for guilty pleas). At the same time, curfew violators, many of whom are homeless people or Spanish-speaking immigrants ignorant of the curfew, have all been held on \$8,000 bail — an astronomical amount for such a petty charge. What makes this even more hypocritical is that the nominally city-wide curfew seems only to have been enforced in communities of color. I've verified that a group of city attorneys threw a wild party on the fourth night that lasted far beyond curfew. Then on Monday morning, they came into court and sanctimoniously asked the judge for 30-day sentences for hapless curfew arrestees.

However repulsive, these practices are not unfamiliar. But the federal role has added at least three new and ominous elements. First of all, we have seen the unveiling of the domestic version of the Rapid Deployment Force. We can assume, henceforth, that elite elements of the Army and Marines will be quickly moved into any large-scale urban disorder at an early stage, and not as a reluctant last-ditch measure, as when paratroopers were finally sent into Detroit in 1967.

Secondly, military deployment was accompanied by an unprecedentedly massive introduction of a thousand personnel from every branch of federal law enforcement, including marshals, FBI, DEA [Drug Enforcement Administration], Border Patrol, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms. On the one hand, INS and Border Patrol agents, assisted by the LAPD, swept through the streets of MacArthur Park and other immigrant Latino neighborhoods like a giant vacuum cleaner, deporting every undocumented person they could lay their hands on. Most of the six hundred to seven hundred people deported in this way were not involved and were never charged with any riot-related offense. They were simply walking the

streets or waiting at street corner day-labor markets. On the other hand, a 100-person task force of FBI and DEA agents, together with local police and sheriffs, have taken the lead in tracking down the alleged gang "ringleaders" of the uprising.

Thirdly, prosecutors from the U.S. Attorney's office, working in a special task force with the D.A., are superimposing layers of additional federal offenses on key defendants. The legal lynching of the four youths accused of attacking the truck driver and other motorists is the most vivid example so far of how the Bush administration's "weeding" of the cities will work. In this case, "interference with interstate commerce," a felony that carries a possible 20-year sentence, has been charged on the surreal grounds that the truck driver's cargo (local gravel) was being hauled to a destination where it might be mixed with out-of-state ingredients.

Moreover, at the time of this interview, we do not yet know how many RICO [Racketeering Influence and Corrupt Organizations Act] indictments may yet be returned against leading gang members. (The D.A. and U.S. Attorney's offices have indicated that there will be "many.") RICO, of course, is a contemporary version of the Criminal Syndicalism Laws of the First World War or the Alien and Sedition Acts of the early Republic: an all-embracing conspiracy statute that circumvents traditional canons of evidence and due process. As I indicated earlier, this RICO net may ultimately be cast very far and wide, as the feds try to implicate Farrakhan and others in the supposed "conspiracy."

CAIB: Will the recent appointment of Willie Williams to succeed Gates make a difference to LA?

MD: The kinder and gentler LAPD, led by Williams, will be a real rebuilding with increased emphasis on intelligence and the development of a coordinated riot and disturbance control strategy that probably will continue to be closely coordinated with the feds. Unlike in the '60s, when the National Guard marched back home, this time a staff element remains in the city. The Marines at Camp Pendleton will also remain on alert. I think that we are going to see an institutionalization of that kind of federal presence.

While the major internal contradictions about race in the LAPD will remain, I believe that Williams will be fairly effective in cleaning up the surface. The LAPD is, in a sense, in transition to being a multiracial police department. It's ironic, but you can have a kinder, gentler LAPD that includes more people of color, with fairly effective systems for dealing with the more egregious abuses, and at the same time have a rapidly rising level of repression.

CAIB: As FBI Director from 1978 to 1985, William Webster was involved in the COINTELPRO operations. As Director of Central Intelligence from 1985 to 1991, he ran covert operations for the CIA. What are the implications his appointment to the investigatory committee?

MD: In a nutshell, I would say that Webster's been brought in to focus only on why the police weren't more effective in putting down the disturbance, not on any misconduct on their part. Furthermore, he will develop far-ranging suggestions about crowd control and political intelligence, and probably set in place some system of coordination on a county-wide and state-wide level that can be copied across the country.

Webster's brief seems to center almost entirely on all the mistakes in the so-called initial deployment planning and intelligence for the riot. There are liberals in this city who were appalled by the Rodney King decision, but equally appalled that the police didn't wade in immediately and, I don't know what, shoot looters or crush demonstrations? It's become a totally hypocritical kind of discourse.

CAIB: Will Officer Steven Powell and his overtly racist ilk survive the new order?

MD: Williams has signaled his intention to purge the department. In 1991, the Christopher Commission produced its analysis of what was wrong with the LAPD. It precisely parallels the apologies of the McCone Com-

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taken during the rebellion.**

mission and concludes that if you get rid of a "criminal fringe" of 60 or 70 out-of-control, ultra-violent officers, everything will be hunky-dory. Williams, who has indicated that he's going to find ways to purge the "Powells," will get an extraordinary mandate and honeymoon period, during which time it will be much more difficult to mount any criticisms of the police.

Even now, the only criticism you hear from the White liberals in LA is that the LAPD wasn't more "competent" and overwhelming in its immediate response. It's come into

their neighborhoods and middle-class people are really scared for the first time. They don't make any distinction between poor Latinos in Hollywood looting a market and the top leadership of the Crips or Bloods.

Their exaggerated fears will ultimately override principles and considerations of justice in West Los Angeles, as it has in Simi Valley. The actuality of and potential for repression are hardly mentioned. People just don't realize the number of homes that have been illegally entered by the police at 2:00 a.m. in South Central LA. Nor do they realize that the Webster Commission and the increasing intelligence-gathering powers and repressive strategy of the police are no more likely to know boundaries in the 1990s than they were back in the 1920s or 1960s.

CAIB: The LAPD has a certain amount of autonomy that's fairly unusual for cities. What about the Sheriff's Department? Under whom do they operate?

MD: They have more autonomy. Perversely, it's partially because the sheriff is elected. Sherman Block is a liberal Jewish Republican; he's extremely smooth and politically invulnerable. Those people who live in unincorporated areas don't have access to anything like a city council person or alder. There are big sections such as East LA, Firestone, and the Willowbrook areas which look just like ordinary parts of the inner city except they're unincorporated. They're controlled by the sheriffs who have untrammelled authority over their lives.

So, the real question of police abuse and community control in LA County has been a question of the sheriffs as

George Bush is going to run as the president who put the troops in LA and sent the federal prosecutors in behind them.

well as the LAPD, particularly if you're Latino. More of the Latino working class is actually affected by the sheriffs than they are by the LAPD.

So, it's important to remember that it is not only the police who are a problem, but the Sheriff's Department which has been even worse. It's truly more out of control and has even higher levels of brutality against people of color. Over the last two years, the sheriffs have been responsible for more than a dozen unlawful killings, several of which were virtually coldblooded assassinations.

And although the Sheriff's Department is probably more racially integrated than the LAPD, this has had

absolutely no effect in preventing avowedly White-supremacist groups from operating inside the department. Last year, for example, a judge corroborated longstanding rumors that a White racist "gang" known as the Vikings had been organized inside the Lynwood Station in a majority Black and Latino suburb. This notorious station is under lawsuit for literally scores of major abuses, ranging from murder and torture to unlawful detention and beatings.

But somehow all this blood just seems to wash off Sheriff Sherman Block's manicured hands. Unlike Chief Gates, he keeps his foot out of his mouth and cultivates a cordial relationship with the press.

Recently, Block announced his interest in next year's mayoral election. It would be the ultimate irony for Los Angeles to finally get rid of Gates as police chief only to have Sheriff Block as the next mayor.

CAIB: Given the potential for backlash and the current level of fear, will the events in LA have an important impact on the upcoming presidential election?

MD: Absolutely. George Bush is going to run as the president who put the troops in LA and sent the federal prosecutors in behind them. He's going to tell the country that only a Republican president is capable of protecting the suburbs and maintaining law and order.

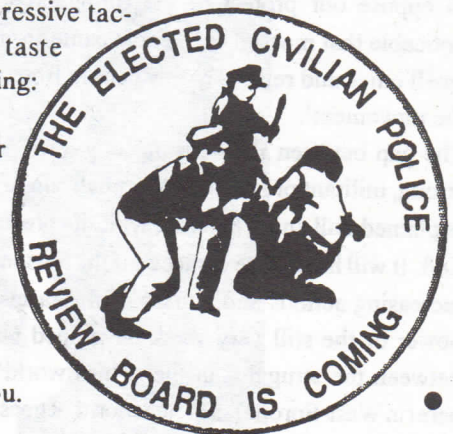
"Operation Weed and Seed" (one of the scariest, most invidious slogans and programs I've ever heard of) is the new Bush urban program for the '90s. On the "seed" side, this upward distribution of wealth is just another way to implement the capital gains tax break Bush been unsuccessful in getting through Congress and to universalize enterprise zones in the inner city.

But actually, he's quietly gone further already. He's told the cities: "If you're short of money, if you want aid, sell your airport, privatize your public sector." So he's advocating for U.S. cities the same kinds of "structural adjustment" that the World Bank and the IMF are imposing in the Third World.

The "weed" part, on the other hand, includes this whole conjugation of repressive tactics that we had a taste of in the LA uprising:

cultivating the use of RICO and other super-draconian federal penalties, ostensibly to remove the so-called gang leadership.

CAIB: Thank you.



A preliminary estimation of the

Anti-WES

Mobilization in Munich, July 92

Until today from the left-wing radical part of the mobilization there is no common political estimation of the mobilization. As a reason lack of time and power and the summer holidays of course play a bigger part than political differences. So this text is a result of own experiences and some discussions.

O.K., one last cigarette (the room is already cleared up) before starting with this difficult topic.

The heads of the world's seven most powerful industrialized nations have met in Munnich for their yearly "World Economic Summit" at the beginning of July. (Already only the name is an impertinence) The topics were first of all the former Eastern Block and of course as always and in spite of all structural crisis, the showy exhibition of their power. On the occasion of the capital's ruling agent's spectacle an alliance of left-wing and radical Left groups mobilized for counter-activities already since one year. An action unit of international counter-congress, mass-demonstration and action days were planned.

Right from the beginning the main load of the mobilization work was done by few groups and people. In spite of different expectation and all Call Ups the active participation had scarcely grown 'till the days of Munnich. It aggravated that Munnich's Left is relatively small and because of this a strong participation of other cities would have been absolutely necessary. These facts had bad effects on some points, f. ex. on the start of the counter-congress, on the organizing of places to sleep or on the radical Left's organization during the days of Munnich. Also, there were only few discussions as regards content during the preparation time like anyway the mobilization against '500 Years of Colonialism' was and is relatively weak. Nevertheless, very many people came to Munnich than - obviously without further ado and in spite of the expected brutality of the police - to oppose our protest to the ruling 'World Order'. It was noticable that most of the people came from small scenes and small cities and relatively few people from the big 'Centers of the movement'.

The gap between the missing long-term preparation and the strong, militant presence in Munnich can of course not only be explained dull and wholesale with the present weakness of the Left. It will have to be disucced if the reasons are the extremely increasing actions and attacks of the fascists that ties a lot of power or the still very weak developed polotical connection between the struggles in the 'Third world' and the struggles here (in West-Europe) - a connection that goes beyond "Solidarity with..." and "Simultaneity of the struggles" - or the missing of pratical starting-points for a new development here or, or, or all together.

THE INTERNATIONAL COUNTER - CONGRESS

The start of the days in Munnich, the opening of the counter-congress was a fiasco. The university, the only building in the city where the whole congress could have taken place, was taken away by court decission. The alliance splitted on the question how to react on this actual discussion ban one hour before the beginning of the opening manifestation. One part of the alliance spreaded leaf-lets in front of the university on which substitute rooms for the individual forums were given. A chaotic situation arose that nobody could grasp. The university's doors were open, 2.000 peoples stood in front but it was not clear if everybody or at least most of the people wanted to go in and squat the university, we had no idea how the cops would react on that and what kind of counsequences it will have for the international speakers... There was'nt even a suffician PA system; a common discussion amongst the quiet different people in front of the university on the further actions - above all: to squat or not - was not possible. Finally most of the people made a demonstration to a church where an improvizod opening-event took place. Many people felt this decission as an serious defeat and were frustrated because they were just toys of an ungraspable development.

In this situation in front of the university the whole weakness of the mobilization - that it was not dicussed politically, influenced and prepared by many - appeared very clearly: A politically weak alliance that had no common experience and confidence; A preparation group that was much to small and under too great strain; Congress participants that varied a lot and who seemed to have no intention for a common solution; Uncertainty about if it's more important that the congress can take place or that we don't accept the provocation of banning the rooms; And all this in a city which was in state of siege by 10.000 cops. One politically very important aim, to have an broad international discussion and a discussion between the different left-wing sections of FRG and West-Europe was destroyed. Nevertheless some good discussions and relationships arose and they will continue. And there is also the wish to try it again perhaps next year (in another city).

[We will report about these discussions in our next issue]

MASS - DEMONSTRATION

The big demonstration on Saturday was judged generally as a success. 20.000 peoples had come and the international speakers walked in front. The cops 'escorted' the demonstration partly in row of four, helmeted and with bullet prooved vests. First of all the women block and the block of the foreigner's organizations

were attacked again and again by the cops. Nevertheless we managed it to carry through the demonstration self-contained and powerful until the end. This success had a great influence on the mood.

ACTION DAYS

The action days, that took part during the G-7 meeting from Monday 'till Wednesday, should have better been called demonstration days, there were nearly no other forms of actions. This was a pity but also an expression of the weak preparation. The action days started with a brutal escalation by the cops that should turn against them afterwards. 500 peoples dressed up as citizens that underlied the official reception of the statesmen with whistles and slogans were encircled by the cops and very brutally arrested. Also the press got beaten up a bit. The pictures of the wildly beating and strangling cops caused some international sensation and gave us big headlines but there wasn't much of our contents in it. After this debacle the cops were a bit more careful the next days (and not to be forgotten: the triumphant reception of the 500 when they had to be released Monday evening)

In spite of up to 4 demonstrations a day and permanent provocations by the cops the action days were quite lively, the mood was good and the addresses interesting. There were always between 1.000 and 2.000 peoples. During the nights some banks got attacked with molotow-cocktails.

It was noticeable that the political prisoners were present during the whole mobilization. During the mass-demonstration a lot of

slogans demanded their release; in the framework of the counter congress an event on the situation and struggles of political prisoners worldwide took place with several international speakers and ex-prisoners (we will document that event in our next issue); during the action days there was a demonstration for the liberation of the political prisoners. In some countries and movements the possibility of an International Day of the Political Prisoners will be discussed.

The international speakers valued the days in Munich very positively. The discussions were important for them and they liked the connection of discussion and action - this is very seldom in their contacts in western countries. Some of them stated that the presence and brutality of the cops in this 'democracy' isn't much different from their reality at home. Nevertheless they felt very secure amongst us.

AND HOW TO GO ON?

"Question: How can we develop social projects/connections, that have an influence on society. These questions and elements of change should more be discussed and get about in political initiatives. Even in the context of the 500 years mobilization and over and about that."

There are lots of people struggling for another development than the capitalistic destruction. There are lots of urgent and brutal problems. There are discussions, attempts and connections - here as well as internationally.

There is no alternative than ours!



In the night of 10 to 11 August 1992, a field of genetically manipulated corn was weeded in Rilland, Holland. At the same time an agricultural exhibition on bioengineering at the 4-yearly Floriade was 'dismantled'. The actions were claimed by the vurige virussen, the fiery viruses.

Underneath we'll print off their declaration.

With the help of bioengineering, a handful of multinationals want to fetch the monopole on live and award their own practices with oppression and exploitation over here and in the 3 continents.

4 Years after the first Dutch field-experiments started with genetically manipulated plants, the "ziedende bintjes" opened the weeding-season in the summer of '89. A year later the "woedende excorts" followed their example (at two places at the same time) and in 1991 the "razende rooiers" dug up potatoes and corn plants at three different places. Next to the direct damage (of about a few hundred-thousand guilders) the actions especially opened room in the press for groups with arguments against bioengineering and thereby on 'the political agenda' (something groups hardly succeeded in before). In a periodical of the bioengineering lobby they wrote: "The ruining of the field experiments (...) emphasizes the necessity of a much broader basis of support: Therefor the establishment of a wide-ranging and publicly working commision which goes into the more social questions is desirable" (from: Biotechnologie in Nederland, 1990-4). The bioengineering lobby is really putting their back into it, on the level of the E.C. as in Holland, to make bioengineering publicly acceptable, linked to adaptable legislation. In Holland f.e., this is shown by a large campaign on TV and this year at the Floriade. Bioengineering has to have a friendly image: friendly to people and environment. And although the resistance against bioengineering is slowly growing under environmental, rural, food and agricultural organizations, the Dutch Greens (Groen Links) f.e. has a cautious pro-biotechnological standpoint (if there only is a good legislation).

The weeding actions hit the industries directly and they also make clear to ordinary people, that food is manipulated in their backgardens. That's why, since two years, lists are published in Holland, where field experiments will take place. So, take the spade in your hand!



In the village Rilland (Zealand), for the second successive year, the plants improvement concern Van der Have NV did a field experiment with genetically manipulated zeacorn (breed HE 89.) The purpose of this experiment was the same as last year: the determination of the characteristics of the genetically manipulated corn under field circumstances; a PTC-resistance is built in the corn plants against the weed killer 'Basta' (of the chemical concern Hoechst.) Also this year, the experiment has prematurely been brought to an end.

Van der Have NV belongs to the most prominent bioengineering concerns of Europe. This year Van der Have got three licences for field experiments with genetic manipulated crops: corn, beets and rapeseed. All three crop experiments were continuations of experiments in preceding years. Van der Have herefor asked for a dispensation of a few safety measures like prescribed by the Provisional Commission Genetic Modification (VCOGE-M). R van der Meyden of the 'Rijksherbarium' research institute of the university of Leiden chose to do the dirty work for the sake of economic interests. He gave the 'arguments' to take away the fear of the (results of) field experiments. Van der Meyden, as the Dutch pioneer of the biotechnology: "Just Van der Have in itself wants to modificate sugarcane, grasses, sunflowers, lettuce, cucumber, and toma-

atoes." (Parool, 3-8-'91) Next year as well?

In Zoetermeer we find the Dutch petty bourgeois variant of the Spanish Expo: gleaming, prestigious and a (creepy) view on history, present and future. In the World Wonder Garden, as the Floriade is promoted, is the exhibition "Plans improvement and Bioengineering". The exhibition is exemplary for the symbiosis of business, science and the government (including Van der Have). The industries promises that in time there will be finally enough food, produced on an environment-friendly way, with the help of bioengineering. Science is telling that bioengineering is based on no more than just the newest plant improving techniques and the government lets know that they'll see to it that everything is under control by means of their procedures and a commission of experts. This bioengineering propaganda is cloaked in a serious problem: the surplus of population and food shortages of the world. The exhibition can't be visited anymore. The World Wonder Garden has lost a myth.

"What's the problem? The large number of poor people, or the 23 percent of the world which uses 80 percent of the natural resources?"

-Vandana Shiva, during the shadow conference of UNCED.

To the many blessings which have come to mankind thanks to bioengineering belongs the banishment of hunger in the world. This is, at least, one of the most penetrating sounds which are produced by the biotechnologic roll of drums. The reasoning is simple: "In the present future there will be an enormous growth of population. All these people have to be fed and it's noticeable already that the world food production doesn't keep in pace. Rice is the most popular food to many people, so it's of the first importance that there will be varieties which are resistant against diseases and plagues." (prof. Schilperoort in *Transfer-nieuws*, June 1992). The world food problem reduced to a technical problem to which an answer is already crammed. The hereby propagated idea that bioengineering is the solution to hunger is a denial of the structures and historical relations which produce hunger. Moreover, it proclaims that bioengineering is neutral and a values-free technology. It's developed because of charitable motives and with the best meanings. Biotechnology as the Good. This is a vision that just conceals. The development of bioengineering takes place behind the closed doors of the C-3 and C-4 laboratories of the companies and universities, during the private meetings and working consults between the technological lobby and the state, envisaged by the

experts of advisory committees and patent bureaus. Developing technology is an extensive program, that is based on specific interests and perspectives. It's based on balances of power and it's an important factor of power itself too. It has the power in itself to (re)define what is the nature of the problems in question: what is the solution and what isn't: what is superior and what isn't. Technologies carry, to a high

which has characterized the relation between the North and the South already for ages. It is in these social structures that bioengineering is developed, and in these structures it will do her work.

HUNGER

In 1887 Italian priests brought a ship with Italian cows and bulls to Eastern

with them. Raw materials from the colonized countries filled the holds of the ships on their way back. After centuries of intensive western interference with the countries of the third world, millions are now facing starvation.

Images of hungerbellies, dry steppes and dried up acres regularly fill the TV-screens. The striking structures of oppression and exploitation however have been simply 'zapped' from



degree, the codes of the balance of relations in which they have been developed and produced. A capital-intensive technology f.e., forces to enter into dependency relations with banks and financiers. So this application leads to reproduction of exactly those relations that 'built in' in the matter of technology.

Bioengineering is not a technology which is free of values, neither at all it is a solution to hunger. It clears the way for a sharpening of the relations of exploitation,

Afrika. With that they imported a form of foot-and-mouth disease, which eradicated 90 percent of the Eastafrican stock of cattle. At once the whole of Eastern Africa was threatened by starvation. The myth of natural calamities as the reason for hunger and poverty was born.

If this had been only an isolated case it would have maybe turned out better than expected. But everywhere where the whites passed by, they took their esteemed superior cattle and foodcrops

the screen. Poverty and hunger are apparently uprooted, their causes reduced to little rain, too many children and stupid farmers. "The African agriculture is backward", stated Aart de Zeeuw, the Dutch chairman of the agricultural commission of the General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) (Onze Wereld, December 1987.) It is exactly this racist notion of superiority that paved the way for centuries of exploitation and oppression.

Farmers (m/f) of the Third

World knew agricultural structures that were based on a knowledge about plant-species, -varieties and agricultural methods, that were acquired and passed on throughout the centuries. Several kinds of grains and seeds existed, which could be used for the dryer or wetter periods. The agriculture was self-sufficient, aimed at the local food-provision, adapted to the local circumstances and social structures.

Almost all culture crops people feed themselves with, are coming from the tropical and subtropical regions of the world. The 'originally' Dutch potato is not a discovery of Vincent van Gogh, but comes from the Andes. Nowadays there's not much left of these wealthy and self-sufficient structures. The European rulers didn't only take away their own crops and methods, but also negligently shove away the local habits. They robbed plants and began to exploit them at home. They imposed an agricultural model which was adapted to the western needs. It are these structures which cause hunger. In the whole world there is more than enough food production to feed the population. 80 Percent of all these raw materials is eaten by 20 percent of mankind, living in the rich North. Hunger is the result of the economical warfare of the North against the South.

THE GREEN CONTRA REVOLUTION

The example of what is optimistically called 'the Green Revolution' in the historybooks, is showing in a nutshell how such processes work. In the '60s, many countries set up large agricultural programmes. The ones who took the initiative were private institutions like the Rockefeller Foundation, the Ford Foundation and institutes like the International Monetary Fonds (IMF) and the Worldbank. This 'Green Revolution' meant a large-scale intervention in the agricultural structures of the Third World. Local breed and breeding praxis had to leave the field. The use of varieties with high yields, monocultures, large scale and intensive use of artificial fertilizer and the introduction of modern agricultural machines had to lead to an important extension of the yields. And in first instance this also happened. But after a lapse of time the winners and the losers became known. The losers are the local farmers (m/f). Because of the introduction of monocultures the plant-diseases increased and it became necessary to use more weed killers. To realize this, high investments were needed, so small farmers dropped out of the race. Acres with artificial fertilizer need more water, so irrigation projects had to follow, but there were no draining systems. Large areas are permanently flooded, or change into a salt desert. A few years later the farmers are having the stuff in their hands, with a destructed

agriculture, with soured soil and water, genetical erosion, high debts, crops with an over-sensitiveness to all kinds of diseases and an increasing use of all kinds of expensive western inputs like artificial fertilizers and weed killers. A vicious circle of misery and hunger. Winners were the major chemical concerns and the seed industry and the Brabant farmers. Because due to the overproduction of corn, the food for swines is almost for free. A new class of poors, landless and inhabitants of slums came into existence.

In the agriculture two-third of the work is done by women. In the statistics and official reports this is usually concealed by qualifying it as domestic work, or it is not worth mentioning because these jobs are unpaid. The engineers followed this patriarchally worn-trodden track and denied the importance of the knowledge and the work of the women. The large scale intervention in the social structure, under the pretext of 'modernizing', was exclusively directed to the male farmers. Doing so, the germ for her failure was already laid. The consequences of these actions mostly affected the women. Men left and went to the cities or to the large plantages as agricultural labourers. Women, who did most of the work already, had to work even more. They lost their land to big companies, the burden of providing their own food rested only on their own shoulders.

AGRICULTURAL POLICY

Swimming in a milklake and sitting on top of a butter mountain, speaking about foodshortages is Orwellian. Hunger is not a problem of too little food; it is a problem of how the foodproduction - and distribution is organized. The traditional selfsupporting agriculture in the Third World countries is sysematically ruined in favor of an western orientated agriculture. Who pushes one's way through the dung-quota, exportsubsidies, angry French farmers and Brabant pigs, discovers a agricultural policy in which money is made out of hunger.

Enormous agricultural grounds in the South are brought in to produce for the western market, f.e. as raw materials for cattle food. "To feed the 120 million animals in Holland, enormous quantities of raw material have to be imported from the South. In this way 20 farmers in the South have to work for one farmer in the North. The Dutch bio-industry uses 15 million hectares elsewhere." (Regio Taal 1992/1) The southern countries are often forced to do so by the adaption-programmes which are imposed by the IMF and the Worldbank. The production has to be aimed at export to get foreign valuta, which than has to be given in again, to pay off the debts to western banks. In Brazil f.e., more and more land was put into use for the export cultivation of sojabbeans. Small farmers

were expelled from the most fertile grounds. The production of black beans, the daily food of millions of Brazillians has, as a result, gone down strongly. The prices of the black beans have rissen sharply and have become unpayable to the poor. This is the way hunger comes into being. And in the GATT-treaties recorded that the countries of the South may only forbid the export of food if there is an inland famine.

Calling in the southern agriculture in the world-economy happens extremely selective. Because of fear for competition, f.ex., there has always been a discouragement of the production of wheat, vetegables and fruits from glass-houses. The western agricultural policy is protectionistic, it prevents coming in agricultural products from the Third World. In the GATT-treaties is recorded that there are high tariff-walls for products out of the South, if these products can also be worked up or produced in the North. In the opposite case there may not be any import restrictions to products from the North that are exported to the south. But still, all this isn't enough. The West has altogether laid hands on their markets too; by dumping grain- and meat surplusses with high exportsubsidies. The -cheap - export of western food surplusses to the Third World hinders the coming into existance of an independant

agriculture overthere. On the one hand the West retards their import, on the other hand the West dumps on the world market. Every sack of grain which is sent away will sooner or later take the opportunity of a female farmer in Afrika to sell one, although she could keep herself and her children alive of the proceeds of it, for about a month.

With that it is not said that its all honey for the western farmers (m/f). In fact they experience the same mechanisms of the worldwide agricultural policies: scaling-up, industrialization and the increased loss on the contol over their own products. To put it shortly: dependancy. The introduction of bio-engineering also means to them that they'll continually have less to tell about what they're growing. Over their heads too, decisions are made by the big chemical concerns and the financial and political institutes. Like for a while, the proposal of 'de Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid', the WRR (Scienific council for Governmental Policy) to reduce the European agricultural grounds with 80 percent. What kind of social consequences such a thorough restructuring will have doesn't make a difference. Money is round...

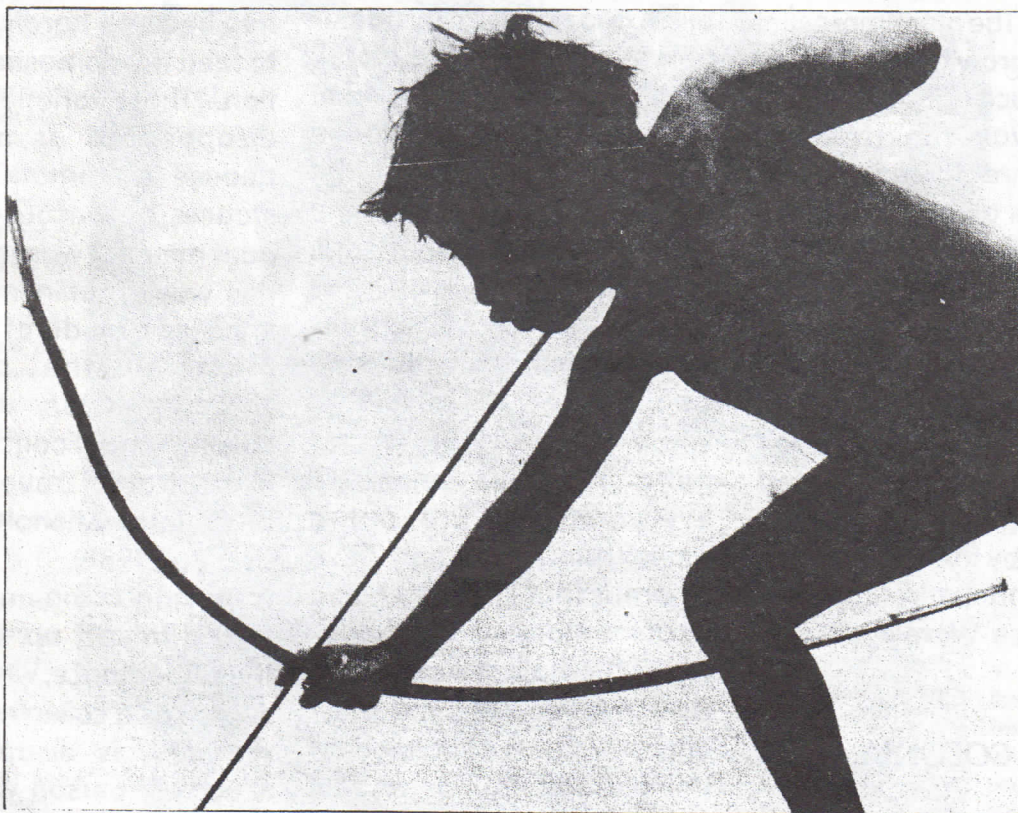
BIOENGINEERING

It's against this background of inequal economical

and political relations, that the introduction of biotechnology has to be seen. And another time the West waves with one of her technologies and proclaims the coming state of fortune and wealth for humanity. It is recommended like some washing-powder: The Second Green Revolution, now without disadvantages! There ain't a word of truth in it. Hunger is caused by the stranglehold from the West

areas. This has to do with mutual interchangeability of the crops. With the help of bioengineering, industry is increasingly able to split up agricultural products into components as carbohydrates, proteins and fats. In this way there is a better possibility of putting together agricultural products as raw materials for industry. The food industry is more and more beginning to look like a compound food industry, but

cocoa, sugar-cane, bananas now threaten to be produced in fabrics in the North. Not a grain of sugar is used in the soft drink industry anymore. Also the cacao-bean has almost become superfluous thanks to the scientific diligence. Ghana, Ivorycoast, Cameroon and Equatorial Guinee are for a large part of their income depending on cocoa. This threatens to strike away the vulnerable basis under the economies of the



on the South. Bioengineering will only strengthen the grip.

By the introduction of bioengineering the relations between agriculture and industrie will be totaly turned upside down. Industry is no longer working up crops that are produced by the agriculture, but will determine more and more which crop has to be grown on which

now for people. The direct producers and (female) farmers around the world are becoming pawns which can be played off against each other however the food industry pleases it. Substitution is another threatening application possibillity of bioengineering. Many crops which grow much better in tropical regions, like coffee,

Third World. Because of the wave of automation and flexibilization of work, the countries of the Third World have partly lost their "advantage" of low salaries. Since the industries are partly drawing back to the western countries, the countries of the Third World are extremely dependant on the export of their agricultural products.

And now the introduction of biotechnology threatens to take away that as well. The (female) farmers are also going to become heavily dependant on sewing seeds, because the sewing seed industry has become the control of it. The research in the agri-industry is focussing on making plants resistive against weed killers. Farmers who buy these seeds are forced to buy weed killers too, produced by the same company. The plantimprovers prefer to grow hybrid breeds that produce unuseful seeds. In this way the (female) farmers are forced to buy new seeds all the time. Prins Claus: "The sombre prospect seems to become reality that many will be unemployed and many others become dependant of the ones who have the whole foodchain in their hands, from manipulated seeds to manipulated end-products, by their knowledge of biotechnological processes." (Onze Wereld, August 1987)

GENETIC COLONIALISM

In 1985 Ciba-Geigy (Swiss chemical concern and one of the major investors in agricultural bioengineering) offered the government of Ethiopia a kind of hybrid sorghum, packed in three chemicals. Two were to protect the plant against certain diseases and the third was making the seeds immune against the herbicide Dual, then at the time the most important weed killer of Ciba.

The prognitor of which Ciba grew this "Bica-sorghum" came from Ethiopia and was stolen from there. The countries of the Third World from which the genetic material is stolen are forced to buy back the "improved" variations for pricey money. Precisely this last aspect makes clear how harrowing the developments are: why Third World countries consider bioengineering as an ordinary form of economical and cultural imperialism and not at all as a solution to hunger in the world. With the help of the (women) farmers, a rich knowledge developed through-out the ages, -and especially in the Third World-, of different sorts of plants and animals. It is this genetic source which provides the world with food and assures her bio-diversity. These kinds of natural genetic structures belong to everyone and are not a moneyspinner of only few, whereas that is what's going on at the moment. The changing of the Patent Acts, which is at this moment the most important political project of the bio-boffins, has to seal this development. Now they've destroyed the largest part of the natural inheritance, the rich countries want to lay down, that that what is still intact, is belonging to them as well. About 30 years ago farmers at Sri Lanka still grew about 2000 different sorts of rice. Now there are only five left. The remaining varieties are destroyed or threatened to be.

The richest plant stock of the world existed in the An-

des. The territory has made an important contribution to world food provision. In the course of centuries the peoples of the Andes created a wealth of knowledge and techniques, which harmonized to a high degree with their social and climatic circumstances. Now the agriculture for domestic application has disappeared because of the orientation on commercial agriculture by use of modern technology, and it has become hardly possible to feed the domestic population. "These varieties haven't disappeared as a consequence of climatic circumstances, but because a dominant minority wanted it to be this way. That minority has imposed a model of development on the people". (Roberto Haudry de Soucy, International Foundation for Agricultural Development (IFAD), International Cooperation, July 1988). The more the traditional communities are forced to split up, the more their inheritance, which is preserved as a collective historic memory, is disappearing. "Each old person who is dying overthere, is a library which burns down" (Galeano, *El tigre azul y otros articulos*, 1987). Like the western world claimed the right of ownership in former days, whether by planting a royal flag or by decimating the local population, nowadays no less than the right of ownership on live and nature is demanded. Knowledge and practice are stolen from the treasuries of the Third World. And than a gen is isolated in the western

laboratories and here we are!; the superior western science can flaunt with another new invention. Pat Nooney, a Canadian agricultural activist. "The argument that intellectual ownership can only be awarded when it's developed in white coats and laboratories is a racist point of view on scientific development". Racist, because of the simplism of the denial of the importance of this local knowledge. Racist, because of the appropriation of knowledge, meanwhile adding shamelessly: "Made in the western world". To apply, the next moment, at a patent office where the robbed money can be cashed. This means f.e. that big money is made out of the anti-cancer remedies Vincristine and Vinblastine. The base medicine consists out of pink periwinkle, a plant that is found on Madagascar. The knowledge of the medicinal effects of this plants comes from the inhabitants, but they get nothing of the enormous profits which are made on it. Or the Monsanto-company (an American chemical concern and one of the major investors in agricultural bioengineering) which wants to apply for a patent on a part of the genetic construction of the Tiki Uba plant, that can be used as an anti-coagulation remedy. The Uru-eu-wau-wau tribe, of which only 120 members are still alive since they've been made partners in the blessings of the white civilization, discovered the healing effects of the plant.

But the intellectual ownership doesn't go for them.

UNCED

Attempts of the Third World countries to get back something of their cultural inheritance, are blocked by the rich countries. This are the moments where the masks go off. And the sweet talks about bioengineering can't conceal that this is the way to keep on exploiting the Third World, making money from it. he so-called bio-diversity-treaty, which had to be signed during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) show in Rio, is a clear example. The treaty, which had to protect the world bio-diversity, left the possibility open that the Third World countries had to give permission to the use of their genetic reserves for industrial purposes. And moreover, the Third World countries wanted to claim a part of the yields, or entrance to the processing technology. But this clearly isn't the way how the world is put together, according to the western countries, with Japan and the U.S. in the lead. For centuries they came unasked and took everything they needed, so why ask for it now? And they were right in that. According to the Human Development Report 1992 of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) the gap between rich and poor has become larger. Were the inhabitants of the rich countries 30 times better off in 1960, this had increased to 60 times in 1989.

As soon as the word "hunger" is mentioned the rich countries rather see the problem differently: It's the overpopulation of these countries that causes the problems. And here is the other solution: population policy! Large-scale and enforced sterilizations and contraceptives applied on the women of the Third World will bring solution to all problems. Here we see exactly the same mechanisms as in the fairy-tales on bio-engineering and hunger: a western technological solution to all social problems, without the necessity for social political changes. Since it is also hunger and poverty which causes the population growth, the fight against poverty, the improvement of education and public health are ways to solve the problem. But the solution asks for far-ranging changes and that's why it is no option. Osiskarcy de Oliveira put it like this during the shadow conference of the UNCED. "There is something fundamentally wrong with a world where the rich have the disposal of expensive genetic manipulation to still have a baby, whereas the poor are forced to undergo sterilization. The world is more and more dictated by economic values. Everything revolves around the market instead of life. The poor don't count because they're no consumers. We neglect Afrika with AIDS because this doesn't bring enough, economically seen, and blood of the poor doesn't give ink" (De Volkskrant, July 11 1992)

The New World Order

It's not really new, this New World Order of Bush'. At least not to the poor countries, who just notice the tightening of the grip. 500 Years after Columbus, the western world

ers, homeless people, without any rights. In the wake of the devastating marks which the West has left in their communities, they look for something that can keep them alive. Most of the refugees are in the Third World, few of



has free hands to cheerfully exploit the last bits of world and live. The oppression is dressed in a decent grey suit and is meeting at illustrious clubs as the Worldbank, the IMF, GATT, UNCTAD, Lomé, the Club of Paris etcetera. These institutes create and formalize preconditions for so-called free trade and open markets, so much desired by the multinationals. Because of the fancied international representation of these clubs for gentlemen, these agreements offer a legitimacy to the free trade and the consequences of it. That is, if you don't stumble over the small bumps like, - who brings in the most money also determines the outcome of the game. Yearly, in the mean while, there are 75 million people underway as refugees, legally or illegally, work-

them able to reach the North, where they walk up against the walls of the fortress Europe. Built up by the same gentlemen who have worked their way up by trampling on the peoples of the Third World and shipping their wealth to the rich countries. But it's not a very popular job these days, to link up these connections. It only disturbs the self-confident image of the Western as lord and master of this globe, superior in his culture, economy and knowledge. And the native is looking up to him, with an appealing look, asking whether he can share in the technical wonders of the white man. As if it was a mission instead of an ordinary success story of a plundering. Or is it perhaps in the white genes? "Till now, genetic modification is a science which promises uses

without any bad sides," states prof Schilperoort (Transfer-nieuws, June 1992). If you dare to talk about nonsense like that, you've really understood that whoever is in power to define the problem also has the patent to the solution. That trade in hunger is a very lucrative business is rather kept silent by the experts. The yields of the fertile agricultural areas of the Third World are not often reserved for the domestic population, but necessarily exported to the western market.

Dictated by f.e. the World-bank

This same Worldbank is storing a profit of 2.7 billion guilders this year (about 1.7 billion U.S. dollar - transl.). This is the disillusioning reality which has to be made clear time after time, stripped from its racist mantle, which tries to show that farmers in the Third World are too stupid to grow land in a proper way. Or that you're really asking for problems when you're born in the Sahel.

One of the major threats of the discussions around bioengineering is that the definitions of the protagonists are sneaking in and are slowly taken over. That hunger is a technical problem which can be solved if we only give a free hand to the bioengineers. In the book of the thousand-and-one-fairy tales, the tale of hunger scores well. With tear-filled eyes we send a cheque or a grain-mountain to one of the hungerbellies in Sudan, while there's a white coat standing

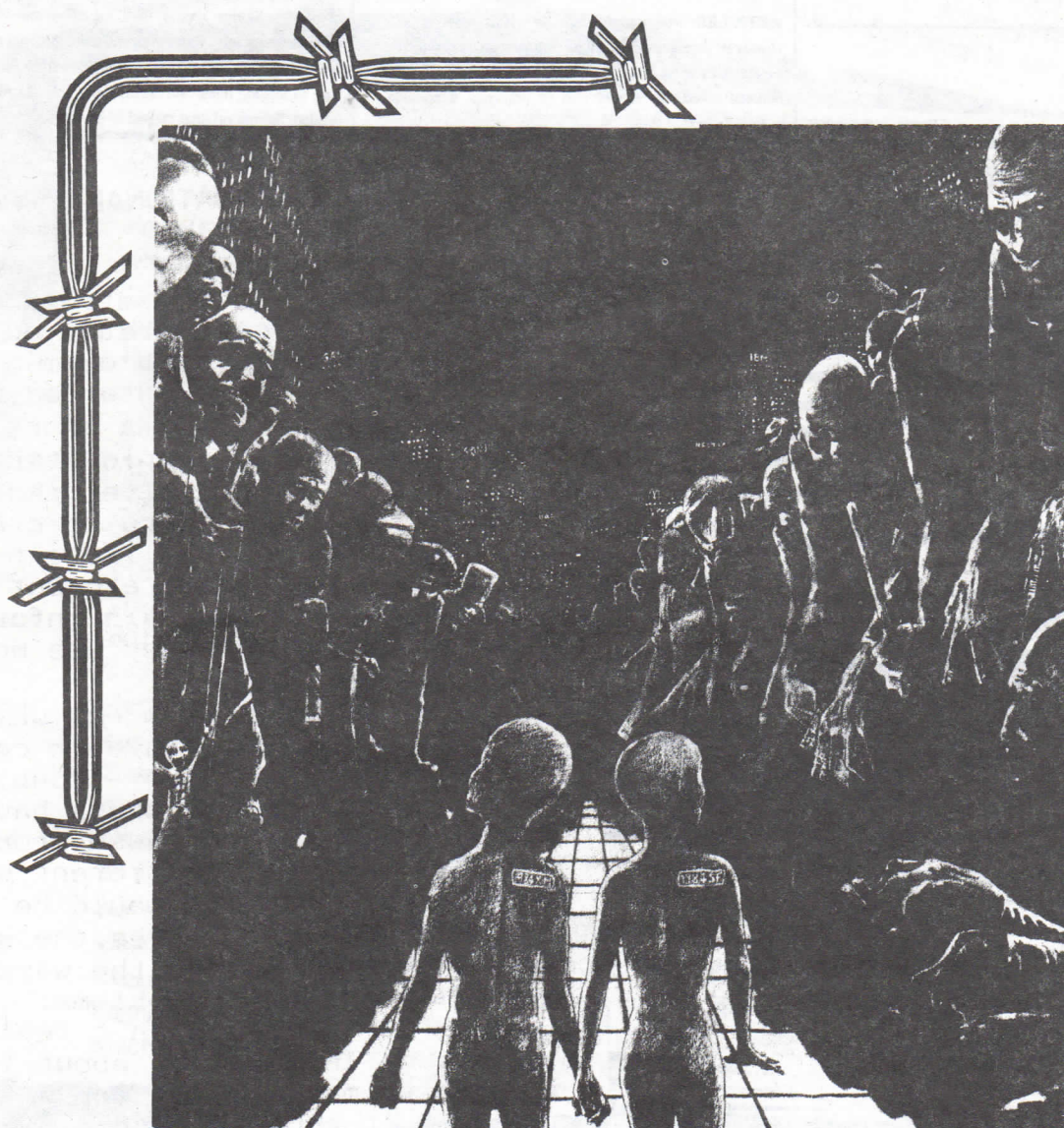
around the corner who's polishing his pair of tweezers ones more, to be able to refine hunger even better. One eye fixed on the stock-market, the other on the political agenda, the agents in hunger run from discussion of progress to boardmeeting. Never to miserable to stop for a microfone and state that banning of hunger is their only will to live. Subsequently drawing up at a copious meal, thus putting their ideas into action. The only hunger they know is hunger for more. The

real art is tripping them up in their hurdle race which inviriably ends up at a Swisch bankaccount. People from different quarters are already sticking out their legs. People of the Third World, environmental groups, Third World groups, critical scientists,... and groups like ours. With concretely demonstratable responsibilities and concretely demonstratable political moments. With just the few means which we have at our disposal we want to place matters in a political context; thus unmasking social backgrounds like bioengineering as political weapons, which are purposefully brought into

action to secure profits and influence, over the backs of millions of people. On the question of how bioengineering should be controlled, CDA- (a major political party in Holland, transl.) spokesman Reitsma answered: "Drawing boundaries is not in the first place a matter of politics, but especially of society" (Biotekst, March 1992). These words have affected us deeply and we've done our best to draw a small boundary.

greetings,

Vurige virussen



THE BLACK PANTHER

Black Community News Service

FOR MALCOLM: SUMMER, 1991 VOL.1 NO.2 \$1.00



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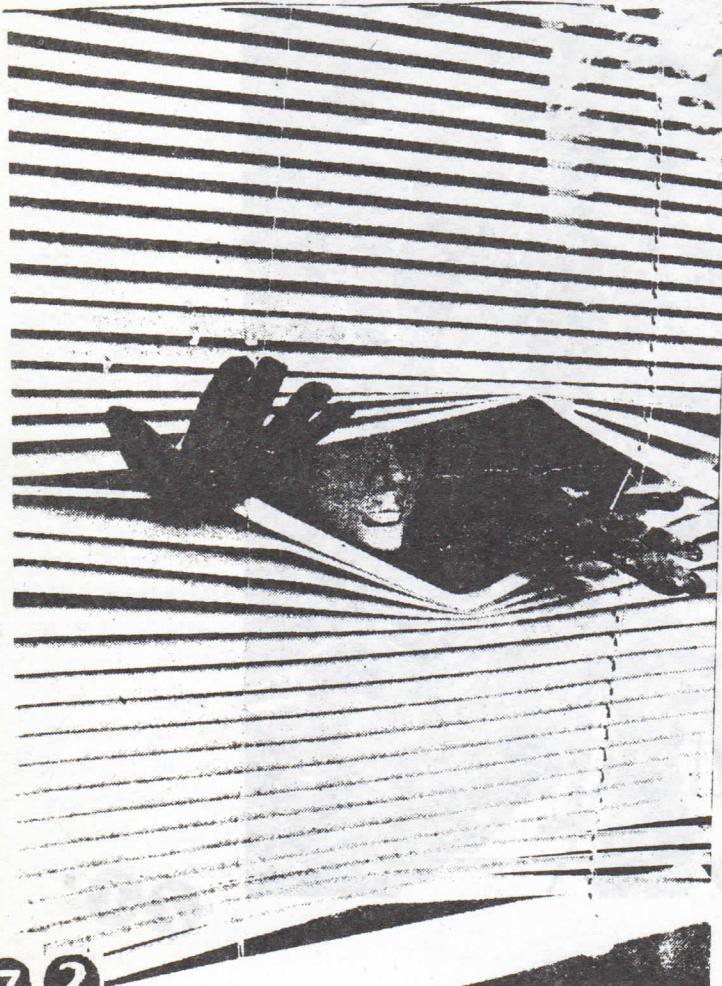
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GUIDELINES: FOR ARTICLES, PHOTOS, ART, AND GRAPHICS

ARTICLES: Manuscripts must be 1100 words or less.
However, especially compelling well-written pieces may be
longer. All articles must be truthful, and where a problem is
outlined a solution should also be proposed if possible.

Article tone should never beg or implore, but insist and
demand. Stories should flow logically; cite references
whenever possible. When ever possible suggest a course of
action: write letters, circulate petitions, feed the hungry. Be
sure to include dates and addresses or other information as
needed. Submit original instead of photocopy.

REPORT FROM THE STRUCTURE-GROUP OF THE INTERNATIONAL INFOSHOP MEETING:



The discussion in the structuregroup
has until now concentrated on the p-
roblems which are most common for
the infoshops. It all started with a
suggestion of writing a short book,
which should help people start new
infoshops. It should give practice
information about where to order bo-
oks from publishers, different ideas
of how to raise money, etc. But the
book should also contain information
about the problems they are most li-
kely to have.

There are many problems which mo-
st of the infoshops have in common:
like sexism, drugs, money-trouble, rep-
ression, etc. Many infoshops haven't
found a solution to these problems
but there are many different ways of
dealing with them. It would be good
to share our experiences, the soluti-
ons we have found, and the ways we
deal with the same problems.

We didn't feel we
had enough information about it, so we
decided to make a question-paper,
and send it round all the infoshops.

When we have all the answers, we can make short summaries. This could give both the old and the new infoshops new ideas of how to handle their problems.

In the text below we have claimed a lot of things which may not be true for all the infoshops, and you may look at the problems from a different perspective. The text is a result of our discussion, which may have many holes. But it is up to you to fill them up! There are also many topics which we haven't mentioned, if you have any additions please send them to us!

Blitz infoshop
Pilestredet 30c
0164 Oslo 1
Norway

We are going to look at the answers at the next IIM, so you have to send them to us before August 15.

DRUGS

In many of our scenes drug abuse is a big problem. Alcohol and hash has many times resulted in people getting passive, resulting in the scene getting split. Hard drugs have also come into the scene.

How are these problems at your place? How is the communication and what is the relationship between people who only drink and use drugs and the people who are involved in political activity? What have you done to solve the problem, and which possibilities have you discussed? Have you found any lasting solution?

HIERARCHY

Our scenes are functioning without leaders and we have always tried to avoid a social ladder inside the scene. We have tried to discuss the problems, and make collective decisions. But there are still 'invisible hierarchies' in many places, some people get listened to more than others. This is a result of people looking

for dominating personalities to carry responsibility, as well as those personalities failing to react to this situation.

Is it like that at your place? Which thoughts have you had about the problem? What has come up in discussions about it?

COMING INTO THE SCENE

COMING INTO THE SCENE

In many places there is a problem with too few 'new' people coming in to the scene. This is often a result of that we are not very good in making them feel welcome and pulling them into activities. There has come a to-

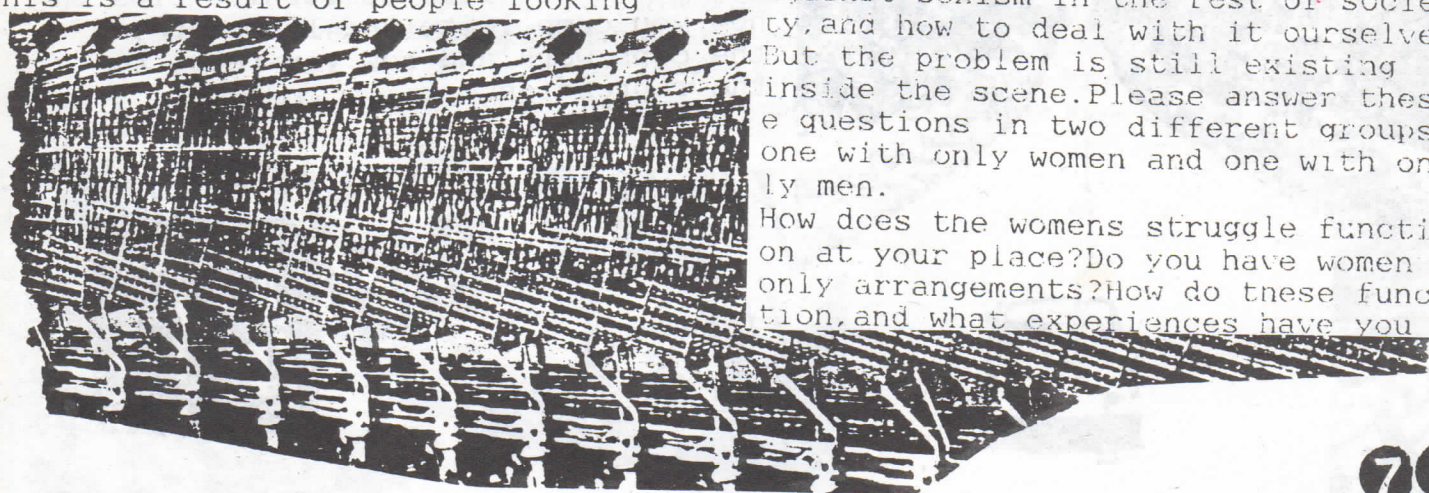
tally 'new generation' of younger people in many scenes. The people who have been inside the scene for longer are mostly not very good at sharing their experience with the others. This leads to making it more difficult for new people to join the scene and that they often make the same mistakes that have been made a thousand times before, and which easily could have been avoided with a bit more communication. And also the problems which the new and younger people have in society are often not taken seriously by the older people.

Is it like that at your place? Why is it that so few new people come into the scene? And how do those who come get received at your place? Is being a consumer at the infoshop the main possibility they have in the beginning? Have you tried to find solutions for this?

WOMENS STRUGGLE

Sexism is still a problem inside the scene. Women don't get listened to, they get dominated, and sexual harassment is not unusual. It has even happened that women have been raped by men from the scene. Sexism has been and still is, one of the main issues inside the movement; both how to fight against sexism in the rest of society, and how to deal with it ourselves. But the problem is still existing inside the scene. Please answer these questions in two different groups: one with only women and one with only men.

How does the womens struggle function at your place? Do you have women only arrangements? How do these function, and what experiences have you



had? Are there mens groups who discuss sexism, and how do these function? Has the womens struggle caused a splitting inside the scene? Do you discuss sexism in mixed groups? Which problems do you have with sexism? How do you deal with them? Do the (the) men in your place only repeat the demands of the women or do they get together to discuss which of the womens demands have positive effects for their own lives? And have the men come up with their own demands in the struggle for equality for women and men?

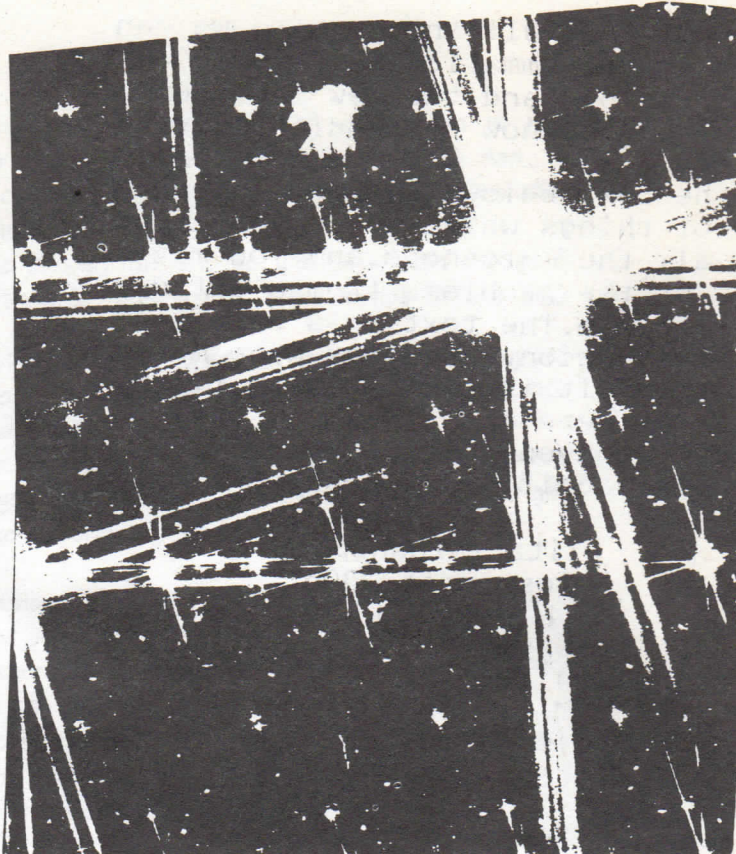
COMMUNICATION WITH OTHER GROUPS

Often people working in the infoshops not only care about their infoshops but are also involved with other groups. Many infoshops also give room for other groups to meet.

Whats the situation at your infoshop? Do you work together with other groups (groups of other political opinions etc)? What ways have you found to communicate? Whats your relationship with other radical leftwing groups? What are the problems?

CULTURE PROBLEMS

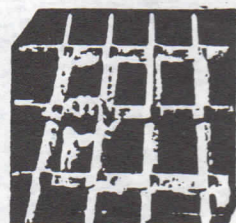
In Europe, white left hierarchies dominate the struggle of established black communities and refugees, controlling the agenda and setting the demands. In many places the (mostly) white dominated autonomous anti-fascist groups don't respect or take in to consideration the refugees ways of fighting. We don't make space in the scene for their wishes and ways of living.



What practice steps have you taken to make contacts with the established black communities and refugees? Have you done anything to make your infoshop and scene a welcoming one? and if so, what?

REPRESSION

The state apparatus has started to criminalise infoshops in most of the European countries. This has also effected the communication between us; many infoshops don't receive their mail at all or only part of it. In Germany the cops are using the 129a against the people working in the infoshops. But the problems with repression are very different from place to place, and it is difficult to write something general about it. Anyway we ask you to write something about it but please, keep it short. We also would like to receive tips on how you complicate (and frustrate) the cops work, and how you react to the repression.



**DONNA KATE RUSHIN
THE BRIDGE POEM**

**I'VE HAD ENOUGH
I'M SICK OF SEEING AND TOUCHING
BOTH SIDES OF THINGS
SICK OF BEEING THE DAMN BRIDGE FOR EVERYBODY**

**NOBODY
CAN TALK TO ANYBODY
WITHOUT ME
RIGHT?**

**I EXPLAIN MY MOTHER TO MY FATHER MY FATHER TO MY LITTLE SISTER
MY LITTLE SISTER TO MY BROTHER
MY BROTHER TO THE WHITE FEMINISTS THE WHITE FEMINISTS TO THE BLACK CHURCH FOLKS
THE BLACK CHURCH FOLKS TO THE EX-HIPPIES THE EX-HIPPIES TO THE BLACK SEPARATISTS
THE BLACK SEPARATISTS TO THE ARTISTS THE ARTISTS TO MY FRIENDS' PARENTS...**

**THEN
I'VE GOT TO EXPLAIN MYSELF
TO EVERYBODY**

**I DO MORE TRANSLATING
THAN THE GAWDAMN U.N.**

**FORGET IT
I'M SICK OF IT**

I'M SICK OF FILLING IN YOUR GAPS

**SICK OF BEEING YOUR INSURANCE AGAINST
THE ISOLATION OF YOUR SELF-IMPOSED LIMITATIONS
SICK OF BEEING THE CRAZY AT YOUR HOLIDAY DINNERS
SICK OF BEEING THE OLD ONE AT YOUR SUNDAY BRUNCHES
SICK OF BEEING THE SOLE BLACK FRIEND TO 34 INDIVIDUAL WHITE PEOPLE**

**FIND ANOTHER CONNECTION TO THE REST OF THE WORLD
FIND SOMETHING ELSE TO MAKE YOU LEGITIMATE
FIND SOME OTHER WAY TO BE POLITICAL AND HIP**

**I WILL NOT BE THE BRIDGE TO YOUR WOMANHOOD
YOUR MANHOOD
YOUR HUMAN-NESS**

**I'M SICK OF REMINDING YOU NOT TO
CLOSE OFF TOO TIGHT FOR TOO LONG**

**I'M SICK OF MEDIATING WITH YOUR WORST SELF
ON BEHALF OF YOUR BETTER SELVES**

**I AM SICK
OFF HAVING TO REMIND YOU
TO BREATHE
BEFORE YOU SUFFOCATE
YOUR OWN FOOL SELF**

**FORGET IT
STRETCH OR DROWN
EVOLVE OR DIE**

**THE BRIDGE I MUST BE
IS THE BRIDGE TO MY OWN POWER
I MUST TRANSLATE
MY OWN FEARS
MEDIATE
MY OWN WEAKNESS**

**I MUST BE THE BRIDGE TO NOWHERE
BUT MY TRUE SELF
AND THEN
I WILL BE USEFUL**

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MARGARETENGÜR-
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1050 WIEN

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